

The Search for the Word of God

**A
Defense
of the
King James
Version
by
Daniel L.
Segraves**

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- What is the *real* difference between the King James Version and modern translations?
- What are the errors in the theory that undergirds all modern versions?
- Wouldn't a new translation be acceptable as long as it is done by conservative scholars?
- What do we know about the men who translated the King James Version?
- Is God's Word resident in *all* the translations?
- What are the physical characteristics of the two Greek manuscripts to which virtually every modern translation owes most readings?
- Why are there really only two Bibles from which to choose?
- Who were the two men who invented the new Greek text upon which modern versions are based? What did they believe about the Bible?
- Isn't the language of the King James Version archaic and out of date?
- Don't the various translations just say the same thing in different words?

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The Search For The Word of God A Defense of The King James Version

By Daniel L. Segraves

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The Fundamental Difference Between The Various Translations

Some twenty-five English translations of the Holy Bible have found a measure of acceptance among Christians of this era. Included in that number are the following translations: The American Standard Version, The New American Standard Bible, The New International Version, The Revised Standard Version, The New English Bible, The New Berkeley Version, Today's English Version, The Amplified Bible, Moffatt's New Translation, and The New Testament in Modern English (Phillips). In addition to these more widely accepted translations are those which are less well known. Another type of "Bible" is the paraphrase, of which the leading example is The Living Bible.

Many Christians are not aware of the fundamental difference between these recent translations and the Authorized Version, commonly called the King James Version. They are under the impression that the newer versions simply update the language of the Bible.

or render God's Word into the common speech of the day. When comparing a reading of the KJV (King James Version) with that of another translation, they are prone to remark, "It says the same thing, but in different words." Because the modern versions supposedly make God's Word easier to understand, some have put aside the King James Version in favor of one of the newer works.

This is not to say that the recent translations are guilty of hiding their fundamental difference; it is explained in the translators' notes to the readers, the preface, or some other literature accompanying the translation. But few people ever seriously study such material. They thus remain uninformed as to the distinctive contrast between the old and the new.

An example of a frank explanation of the basic manner in which a new version differs from the KJV is found in the Introduction to *The Bible, A New Translation*, by James Moffatt:

The initial difficulties in making any such version are started by *the text*. Now the traditional or "massoretic" text of the Old Testament, though of primary value, is often desperately corrupt. . . At. . . points it is in such disrepair that no conjecture can heal it. . . wherever I was satisfied with some correction or conjecture which at least made tolerable sense, I preferred to adopt it. When the choice lay between a guess and a gap, I inclined to prefer the former. . . nearly every page contains some emendation of the traditional text in the interests of accuracy and point. . . very few. . . realize how uncertain and precarious is the traditional text of some books in the Old Testament. . . .

Then, even after a more or less sound text has been secured, it has to be rendered into adequate English....¹

The Fundamental Difference Between the Various Translations

And so far, Moffatt has discussed only the Old Testament! The basic problem, he says, is with the *text*. In other words, the first challenge facing the translator is not “making God’s Word easier to understand,” but deciding what is God’s Word in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. The broad term used to describe this process is “textual criticism.” This involves comparing the many extant (existing) manuscripts (hereafter MSS, or MS when singular) in an effort to determine as closely as possible the reading of the original autographs (the MSS actually penned by the Biblical writers).

Leaving, for the moment, Moffatt’s accusation as to the “inferiority” of the traditional text of the Old Testament, we notice that the basic problem with the New Testament is identical:

The rise of a certain *dissatisfaction with the version* of 1611 came to a head during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, . . . The reasons were threefold. (a) The archaisms of a masterpiece in Elizabethan prose had become either unintelligible or misleading. (b) The advance of scholarship, which in the sixteenth century was quite immature, had opened up fresh methods of studying the diction and syntax of the dialects in which the Bible had been originally composed. (c) And, finally, the progress of textual criticism had reset the entire problem of the text. A translation depends largely upon its text for its permanent value. . . .

. . . This “received text,” or *Textus Receptus*, as it came afterwards to be called, lay before the revisers of 1611. It was, it could not but be, notoriously corrupt. . . .

The text from which the present translation has been made approximates to that of H. von Soden of Berlin, whose critical edition of the Greek New Testament. . . appeared during the first decade of this century.²

So Moffat has clearly revealed the basic difference between his translation and that of the Authorized Version (AV). The AV³ was translated from the traditional Hebrew text (the Masoretic Text) in the Old Testament and from the Textus Receptus⁴ in the New Testament. Moffatt, while admitting that the Masoretic Text was of "primary value," nevertheless corrected it on nearly every page of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, he followed the text developed by H. von Soden.⁵

The situation has changed little since Moffatt first copyrighted his translation in 1922. The preface of a more recent work, the New International Version, confirms that the fundamental contrast between the KJV and the modern translations is still the same, particularly in the New Testament:

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the
Masoretic Text . . . was used throughout. . . .

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament
was an eclectic one. . . Where existing manuscripts differ,
the translators made their choice of readings according to
accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism.
Footnotes call attention to places where there was uncer-
tainty about what the original text was. The best current
printed texts of the Greek New Testament were used.⁶

The translators of the New International Version (NIV) did not follow the Masoretic Text slavishly throughout the Old Testament. Rather, they consulted the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, and other early translations.

Readings from these versions were occasionally fol-
lowed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where
accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one

or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading.⁷

The New Testament was translated from an “eclectic” text. What this means is that no certain text was considered the final authority. Instead, from “the best current printed texts of the Greek New Testament,” the translators created a text of their choosing. It is safe to assume that these “best current printed texts” from which choices were made as to the final text for the NIV included the text of Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (UBSGNT).

The word *eclectic* means “selecting; choosing from various sources.”⁸ Bruce Metzger describes the eclectic text as one in which the editor “follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author’s style or the exigencies of transcriptional hazards.”⁹ E. C. Colwell asserts:

. . . Textual criticism. . . involves subjective judgment. . . By “eclectic” they mean in fact free choice among readings. . . The editor chooses that reading which commends itself to him as fitting the context. . . The weight of the manuscript is ignored. . . the editing of an eclectic text rests upon conjectures.¹⁰

Pickering observes:

An eclecticism based solely on internal considerations is unacceptable for several reasons. It is unreasonable. It ignores the over 5,000 Greek MSS now extant, to say nothing of patristic and versional evidence, except to cull variant readings from them. . . it has no principled basis for rejecting conjectural emendations. It has no history of

the transmission of the text. Therefore the choice between variants ultimately depends upon guesswork. . . Textual criticism ceases to be a science and one is left wondering what is meant by “sound principles” in the NIV preface.¹¹

The Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New English Bible (NEB) are also admittedly based upon an eclectic text. But regardless of what may or may not be said in the literature accompanying any particular translation, virtually every translation produced since 1611 has been based upon such a text. The result is not only that widely different readings are found in the various versions, but that large numbers of words, portions of verses, entire verses, and larger sections of Scripture found in the KJV are either called into question or bluntly dropped from the text.

The Results of Eclecticism in the New Testament

Everett W. Fowler has carefully compared the Greek text used by the translators of the KJV with the other major printed Greek texts translators have used during the past century. He tabulated only those differences which have a significant effect on the translation into English.

. . . The Westcott and Hort text has 2,288 differences from the Received Text that have an effect on translation. The Nestle text has 2,212 and the Bible Societies text has 2,077. There are 1,995 of these differences which are common to the three Greek texts by comparison with the Received Text. Of the differences in the Bible Societies text, 2,018 (97.2%) are identical to differences found in the Westcott and Hort text.¹²

The most glaring and immediately noticeable of the differences between the Received Text of the KJV and the eclectic texts of the

newer translations¹³ are those which include several subsequent verses. Such an example is John 7:53 – 8:11. The King James Version, of course, includes this portion of Scripture without question. But the NIV, while incorporating it into the text, prefaces the passage with the statement: "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have John 7:53 – 8:11." The New American Standard Bible (NASB) incorporates these verses in brackets, thus indicating that there is some question as to their authenticity. The RSV ends John 7 with verse 52 and begins chapter 8 with verse 12. A footnote reads: "Other ancient authorities add 7:53 – 8:11 either here or at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21:38, with variations of the text." Moffatt includes the passage in brackets and offers this footnote: "It is uncertain to which, if any, of the canonical gospels this fragment of primitive tradition originally belonged." The Amplified Bible incorporates it into the text and explains in a footnote: "John 7:53 to 8:11 is not found in the older manuscripts, but it sounds so like Christ that we accept it as authentic, and feel that to omit it would be most unfortunate." Phillips includes the passage, but directs the reader to an appendix, where he says: "This passage has no place in the oldest manuscripts of John, and is considered by most scholars to be an interpolation from some other source. Almost all scholars would agree that, although the story is out of place here, it is part of a genuine apostolic tradition." Today's English Version (TEV) offers the verses in question in brackets, which is the treatment it reserves for those verses "not in the oldest and best manuscripts of the New Testament."

Considering only these seven translations, then, it is clear that the result of the current methods of eclecticism is a startling phenomenon. One might think that if the NIV is correct in claiming some "accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism," these "accepted principles" would lead each scholar to the same, or at least a very similar, conclusion. But, in this case, the only

thing upon which the various translators agree is their uncertainty.

The claim of the NIV that the “earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have John 7:53 – 8:11” would lead the reader to conclude that the passage must surely be spurious. He would then be mystified as to why, if only “late and unreliable” MSS contained the text, the NIV translators choose to include it. Noticeable for its absence in this brief explanation of the NIV is the information as to exactly which MSS fail to include the passage. The reader is left with only his confidence in the translators; his decision cannot be based on the MSS themselves, for the translators have not chosen to tell him which they are.

But we need not remain ignorant as to which are the “earliest and most reliable” MSS which do not contain John 7:53 – 8:11. As Burgon has said, “The only uncial MSS. . .which simply leave out the *Pericope* are the three following: Aleph B T.”¹⁴ The uncial MSS are those ancient MSS which were written in a style of capital letters. We will discuss the nature of Aleph (*Codex Sinaiticus*) and B (*Codex Vaticanus*) later in this work. At this point we are addressing the conflicting results of eclecticism, and we note that the “accepted principles” of the NIV resulted in John 7:53 – 8:11 being included, but only under serious question.

The eclecticism of the RSV prompted the exclusion of the passage from the text and the statement that “other ancient authorities add 7:53–8:11 either here or at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21:38, with variations of the text.” Contrary to the NIV, the RSV does not tell the reader whether the other authorities are earlier or more or less reliable. The student of Scripture is left to guess as to the number of MSS which delete the passage and the number of those which include it. He does not know if those which include it are older or later. He must surely suspect, however, that the weight of testimony in favor of the text is quite weak, for the translators thought best to relegate it to a footnote.

Moffatt's statement "It is uncertain to which, if any, of the canonical gospels this fragment of primitive tradition originally belonged" leaves the reader in a quandary. Typical of the results of eclecticism is that Moffatt is certain only about his uncertainty. But whether or not it was originally included in any of the gospels, Moffatt identifies the passage as a "fragment of primitive tradition." Moffatt's low opinion of the section must surely serve to prejudice the reader against its authenticity.

The translators of the Amplified Bible introduce an entirely new dilemma. They agree with the NIV that John 7:53–8:11 is not contained in the "older manuscripts." But whereas the NIV further associated the earliest MSS with ultimate reliability, the Amplified Bible asserts, ". . .but it sounds so like Christ that we accept it as authentic, and feel that to omit it would be most unfortunate." In other words, even though the oldest (and presumably most reliable) MSS fail to include the text, it is accepted because "it sounds so like Christ." This must surely strike the reader of Scripture as an unstable and entirely subjective basis on which to determine the authenticity of Holy Scripture.

While Phillips agrees with the NIV and the Amplified Bible that the passage "has no place in the oldest manuscripts of John," he asserts that "almost all scholars would agree that. . .it is part of a genuine apostolic tradition." His descriptive phrase, "genuine apostolic tradition" surely ranks the text higher than Moffatt's "fragment of primitive tradition," but it still leaves the reader with the uneasy feeling that John 7:53–8:11 may be genuine tradition, but not inspired Scripture.

These contradictory results of eclecticism in the New Testament could be repeated over many times. But this one example alone serves to demonstrate the inconsistent results of the "accepted principles" currently in vogue. What, exactly, are those principles, and from whence did they originate?

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¹James Moffatt, *The Bible, A New Translation* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935), pp. xix, xx.

²Ibid., pp. xli, xlvi.

³The Authorized Version of 1611 has become commonly known as the King James Version only since the publication of subsequent translations.

⁴The text represented by the Textus Receptus (Received Text) is basically that which is known as the Byzantine, Traditional, Majority, or Koine Text.

⁵Few current scholars would give von Soden's text such a vote of confidence as to render a translation from it. See, for example, J. Harold Greenlee's book, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 83-86, where von Soden's work is said to be "the greatest disappointment in modern textual criticism. . .not always reliable or complete. . .bewilderingly complicated."

⁶*The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corp., 1978), pp. viii, ix.

⁷Ibid.

⁸*American College Dictionary*, s.v. "eclectic."

⁹Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 175.

¹⁰Quoted in Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), pp. 23-24, 26.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹²Everett W. Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* (Watertown, WI: Maranatha Baptist Press, 1981), p. 9.

¹³Proponents of eclecticism will protest that the Received Text was a result of eclecticism, but the situation is entirely different. The Received Text reflects the text found in the vast majority of extant MSS, while the newer texts are based upon a mere handful of MSS, ordinarily from two to five in number. Indeed, in the final analysis, Westcott and Hort often relied on the one MS alone.

¹⁴David Otis Fuller, ed., *Counterfeit or Genuine?*, 2d ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1978), p. 144.

The Origin Of Present Day Textual Criticism

Without question, the fathers of the methods of textual criticism presently in use are F. J. A. Hort and B. F. Westcott. As Greenlee says, "The textual theory of W-H [Westcott-Hort] underlies virtually all subsequent work in New Testament textual criticism."¹ Who were these two men?

Westcott, the senior member of the team, was Hort's teacher at Trinity College, Cambridge. The two became lifelong friends, and collaborated for twenty-eight years in the production of a "critical edition of the Greek New Testament."² Both men were members of the committee for the Revised Version of 1881-85. Westcott and Hort (hereafter W-H) had worked together in the development of their new Greek text prior to the publication of the Revised Version (RV), and "the revision committee had very largely accepted this text, even before its publication, as a basis for its translation of the New Testament."³

There were of course those who had gone before W-H in their

effort to construct a Greek text different from that upon which the KJV was based. Fowler explains:

Westcott and Hort in their theory of the text built on the work of several earlier men, such as Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, who, from around 1775, published Greek texts differing in many places from the Received Text.⁴

Before we consider the praxis of the W-H view of textual criticism, let us first address the issue of their theological stance, for “no one can translate the Holy Scriptures without the theological views of the translator having some influence and effect on the translation made. The same thing is true of one who prepares a Greek text.”⁵ We have already seen the truth of this statement in the brief comparison of the treatment accorded John 7:53–8:11 by various translators.

Hort’s view of Biblical inspiration is clearly seen by his own statements. In an October 21, 1858 letter to Rev. Rowland Williams, Hort said, “Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue. There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority, and especially the authority of the Bible.”⁶

On April 3, 1860, Hort wrote to Rev. John Ellerton: “But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. . . My feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable. If so, it opens up a new period.”⁷

Hort’s fascination with Darwin’s theory of evolution was accompanied by an attraction to Mariolatry. On October 17, 1865, he wrote Westcott: “I have been persuaded for many years that Mary-worship and ‘Jesus’-worship have very much in common in their causes and their results.”⁸

His firm commitment to the Roman Catholic concept of priesthood is revealed in a letter to Dr. Lightfoot, dated October 26, 1867: "But you know I am a staunch sacerdotalist."¹⁰ This well explains his words to Westcott: "But this last error can hardly be expelled till Protestants unlearn the crazy horror of the idea of priesthood."¹¹

Evidently, even Westcott and Lightfoot were shocked by Hort's lack of sympathy for the Reformation and resultant Protestantism. On September 23, 1864, he wrote to Westcott on the subject: ". . . I remember shocking you and Lightfoot not so long ago by expressing a belief that 'Protestantism' is only parenthetical and temporary."¹²

His unorthodox view of the doctrine of original sin is seen in Hort's letter to Mr. John Ellerton: "I am inclined to think that no such state as 'Eden' (I mean the popular notion) ever existed, and that Adam's fall in no degree differed from the fall of each of his descendants, as Coleridge justly argues."¹³

Writing to the same man on July 6, 1848, Hort again evidenced his preference for the Roman Catholic doctrines: "The pure Romish view seems to me nearer, and more likely to lead to, the truth than the Evangelical. . . ."¹⁴

One of the members of the revision committee was the Unitarian G. Vance Smith, who denied the deity of Jesus Christ. Hort considered Smith's membership on the committee as a plus. Writing to Lightfoot, he said, "It is, I think, difficult to measure the weight of acceptance won beforehand for the Revision by the single fact of our welcoming an Unitarian."¹⁵

But not only did Hort have strong sympathies for Romanism, Darwin's theory of evolution, and Unitarianism, as well as a revulsion for Protestantism, he also seemed to have a predetermined aversion to the Majority Text of the Greek New Testament. When he was but twenty-three years old, he wrote to a friend:

I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with the villainous *Textus Receptus*... Think of that vile *Textus Receptus* leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones.¹⁵

It was scarcely more than a year later that Westcott and Hort agreed upon a plan to produce a revised Greek text. Thus, as Pickering notes, there seems from the first to have been a prejudice against the text reflected in the vast majority of MSS:

. . . Though uninformed, by his own admission, Hort conceived a personal animosity for the *Textus Receptus*, and only because it was based entirely, as he thought, on late manuscripts. It appears Hort did not arrive at his theory through unprejudiced intercourse with the facts. Rather, he deliberately set out to construct a theory that would vindicate his preconceived animosity for the Received Text.¹⁶

As the other half of the team which produced the “reconstructed Greek text of the New Testament,”¹⁷ Westcott was in full sympathy with Hort’s views. His attachment to the practices of Roman Catholicism is seen in a letter he wrote to his fiancee from France in 1847: “After leaving the monastery, we shaped our course to a little oratory which we discovered on the summit of a neighbouring hill. . . Fortunately we found the door open. It is very small, with one kneeling-place; and behind a screen was a ‘Pieta’ the size of life¹⁸. . . Had I been alone I could have knelt there for hours.”¹⁹

Westcott’s rationalism is demonstrated in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on March 4, 1890: “No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a

literal history—I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did.”¹⁰

Were either of these two men more responsible than the other for the production of the new Greek text? Pickering discusses that issue:

Although Brooke Foss Westcott identified himself fully with the project and the results, it is generally understood that it was mainly Fenton John Anthony Hort who developed the theory and composed the Introduction in their two-volume work.¹¹

But why must we concern ourselves with the theories of textual criticism developed by men of a century ago? Simply because current theory, with its resultant eclecticism, is little different from that of W-H. Eldon Jay Epp discusses what he calls the “20th century...interlude in NT textual criticism.”

. . .Every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates. . .that we have made little progress in textual theory since Westcott-Hort; that we simply do not know how to make a definitive determination as to what the best text is; that we do not have a clear picture of the transmission and alteration of the text in the first few centuries; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default. Gunther Zuntz enforces the point in a slightly different way when he says that “the agreement between our modern editions does not mean that we have recovered the original text. It is due to the simple fact that their editors. . .follow one narrow section of the evidence, namely, the non-Western Old Uncials.” This lack of progress toward a

theory and history of the earliest NT text is a strong indication that the 20th century has been an interlude in NT textual criticism.²²

Since there are various Greek texts currently on the market, one might be led to believe that significant progress has been made in this area, and that each of the texts makes some giant stride toward regaining the reading of the orginal autographs. But, as Pickering says, "the two most popular manual editions of the Greek text today, Nestle-Aland and UBS (United Bible Society), really vary little from the W-H text. The recent versions—RSV, NEB, etc.—also vary little from the W-H text."²³

Hort may have had an abhorrence for the *Textus Receptus* of his day, but, according to K. W. Clark, he despised the one to hold to the other:

. . .The Westcott-Hort text has become today our *textus receptus*. We have been freed from the one only to become captivated by the other. . .The psychological chains so recently broken from our fathers have again been forged upon us, even more strongly. . . .

Psychologically it is now difficult to approach the textual problem with free and independent mind.²⁴

The lack of textual progress and the slavish manner in which the current texts follow the principles of W-H text is easily seen in the simple mathematical comparison prepared by Fowler. While the W-H text, the Nestle text, and the Bible Societies text differ in varying amounts from the Received Text (2,288; 2,212; and 2,077 differences respectively in only those variations which have a significant effect on the translation into English), "1,995 of these differences. . .are common to the three Greek texts by comparison with

the Received Text."²³

What are these principles developed by W-H, so readily accepted by the majority of the revisers of 1881, and closely followed by textual critics to this day?

*The Theory of Textual Criticism
Developed by Westcott and Hort*

The first thing we would note about the system of W-H was their belief that the task of determining the original text of the New Testament was identical to that of reconstructing the original text of any other ancient work. As Fowler says,

. . . By their own published statements they acted on the basis of the natural man's view of the New Testament text, priding themselves on treating the text of the New Testament as they would any other ancient book. In the introduction of their Greek New Testament they wrote, "For ourselves we dare not introduce considerations which could not reasonably be applied to other ancient texts, supposing them to have documentary attestation of equal amount, variety, and antiquity."²⁴

E. G. Colwell reveals that Hort's theory of the methods which should be used to reconstruct the original text of Scripture is fully acceptable to the academic community as valid to determine the original readings of the classics.

. . . The contents of the so-called "classical literature"—the writings of ancient Greece and Rome—were determined in this fashion; and the contents of the Bible are determined in the same way. . . Students who specialize in

English literature learn its techniques to establish an accurate text of Chaucer's poems; students of Cicero, Caesar, Homer, and Vergil are forced to use either the methods or the results of textual criticism. . .No matter what book may be the object of this study, the methods and techniques employed are the same . . .Textual criticism of the Bible is not a thing apart. In a university seminar which attempts to establish the original wording of Chaucer's poems, F. J. A. Hort's exposition of the methods employed in textual criticism of the New Testament is required reading.²⁷

But there is serious question as to whether the Holy Scriptures and profane literature can be placed on an equal basis at any point, including methods used to determine the original text. Edward Hills says,

If, now, the Christian Church has been correct down through the ages in her fundamental attitude toward the Old and New Testaments, if the doctrines of *divine inspiration* and *providential preservation* of these Scriptures are true doctrines, then the textual criticism of the New Testament is different from that of the uninspired writings of antiquity. The Textual criticism of any book must take into account the conditions under which the original manuscripts were written and also those under which the copies of these manuscripts were made and preserved. But if the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures are true, then THE ORIGINAL NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS WERE WRITTEN UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND THE COPIES

WERE MADE AND PRESERVED UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD.²⁰

Hills further contrasts the two methods of textual criticism, the "consistently Christian method" and the "naturalistic method."

...These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret these materials differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scripture. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.²¹

Just exactly what are these "naturalistic methods" used by W-H and most textual critics since that time? Greenlee sums them up:

...The reading which is at first glance harder to understand in the context often proves to be original. . .the reading from which the other readings could most likely have developed is to be preferred as the original. . .intentional changes were more likely to be additions. . .rather than omissions; thus a shorter reading is generally preferable.²²

We might anticipate that the theory of textual criticism used to restore the ancient texts would be quite involved and complicated, and that it would always tend to lead to the same results, regardless

of which scholar applied it. But the opposite is true. The “rules” are quite brief and tend to produce conflicting results. Restated, the principles are as follows:

1. The hardest reading is to be preferred.
2. The reading from which it is most likely that other readings could have developed is to be preferred.
3. The shorter reading is to be preferred.

These are the basic principles of the W-H theory of textual criticism and also of most textual critics today. If they are faulty, the entire system crumbles. And we must remember that Hort, primarily responsible for the development of this theory, came to the study of textual criticism with a preconceived commitment to the inferiority of the Majority Text, and the superiority of the Minority Text (represented by the few early uncials).

Pickering explains the dilemma Hort must have found himself in:

As the years went by, Hort must have seen that to achieve his end he had to have a convincing history of the text—he had to be able to explain why essentially only one type of text was to be found in the mass of later manuscripts and show how this explanation justified the rejection of this type of text.³¹

The theoretical history Hort proposed is described by Greenlee:

Variants came into the N.T. at a very early stage, at which time scribes felt free to change the text, especially the Gospels, in accordance with other traditions which were in circulation or to agree with a parallel account, or to substitute synonyms, paraphrase a sentence, and to make other variations. Thus by the end of the second century

the "Western" text had arisen, characterized by extensive variation from the original text. Although this text is very early in origin, the principles of intrinsic probability weigh against it in general. It is generally longer than the preferred text. In a number of notable instances, however, it has a shorter reading, in which the Western text alone may have preserved the original. . .

In another area a different influence was being brought to bear upon the text. Alexandria was the home of criticism of the Greek classics. Here the N.T. man. were looked upon with literary eyes; the unsophisticated style of spoken Greek and the literary and grammatical imperfections of the N.T. authors were altered by stylistic changes. . . Thus the "Alexandrian" text is characterized.

After Christianity attained official status in the fourth century, attempts began to be made, officially or unofficially, to deal with the divergencies in the text, aiming at combining readings where appropriate, removing obscurities, harmonizing parallels, and in general to produce a smooth text free from difficulties. Thus arose the "Syrian" text, which was smooth and sensible, yet lacking in the vigor and occasional ruggedness of the original.

One numerically small group of witnesses seems to have escaped the corruptions of all three other text-types and to have preserved the text virtually in its original form. This is the "Neutral" text. It is represented especially in the agreement of B [Codex Vaticanus] and [Aleph], together with a few other witnesses. Sometimes the secondary witnesses desert the Neutral text to follow an Alexandrian variant, leaving the original text in B and [Aleph] with very little additional support. The text of B, moreover, is so superior that its text must always be given close

attention, and in frequent instances the text of B is decisive over all other witnesses.

The text of W-H is therefore an essentially “Neutral” or “B[Aleph]” text, or even a “B” text.³²

Since this “history of the text” is not and cannot be proven by established facts, scholarship would call for diligent examination of each of its tenets.

First, let us consider the claim that “variants came into the New Testament at a very early stage, at which time scribes felt free to change the text.” It is not clear from history that scribes ever “felt free” to change the text. But Metzger theorizes, “Because the number of Christians increased rapidly during the first centuries, many additional copies of the Scriptures were sought. . . speed of production sometimes outran accuracy of executions.”³³ So while Metzger agrees that variants were introduced early, he offers a different explanation. Rather than the cause of variants being scribes who felt free to change the text, it is the speed with which the copies were made that supposedly resulted in errors. To add even further assumptions to the theory of the history of the early text, Gordon D. Fee postulates:

More copies mean more errors, unless there were to be a systematic attempt to correct subsequent copies against earlier ones. But this is precisely *not* what one would expect in the earliest period, when (a) copies would not have been made by trained scribes in scriptoria, (b) such copies were being made for pragmatic reasons, not necessarily with a sense of copying Scripture, and (c) the earliest copies were probably very early carried away from their place of origin (or first destination).³⁴

Later, Fee admits that he is theorizing:

What we theorized above about the earliest copies (not made by trained scribes, made for practical reasons, and each book transmitted independently over a widely scattered geography) seems in fact to have been the case.²¹

Now, in addition to the possibility of numerous variants resulting from scribes who "felt free to change the text" and from the "speed of production," we have three new considerations: 1) untrained scribes; 2) copies being made by those who failed to realize that they were copying the Word of God; and, 3) copies being transported far away from the place of their origin or first destination (though what the latter would have to do with the rise of variants escapes me).

In view of his frank confession that these three points are theory, it is interesting that Fee, in his rejoinder to Hedges' response, says, ". . . anything done at the theoretical level is just that—theoretical, and nothing more."²² In fact, all attempts to reconstruct the history of the early text *must* be theoretical; they can be nothing else. There is no factual recorded history of the transmission of the early text preserved for us from that era.

But are these suppositions reasonable? Is it logical to think that early scribes changed the text when they felt it was the right thing to do? Were early Christians in such a rush to obtain copies that they were willing to sacrifice accuracy? Were the scribes untrained? Were those engaged in copying the Scriptures unaware of the nature of their holy task? These are questions which must be answered.

Another View of the Early Text Transmission

It is doubtful that the early Christians were so naive as to the nature of the apostles' and disciples' writings that they set untrained

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scribes to speedily and carelessly copying them. It is equally as questionable as to whether these early scribes freely added, deleted, or harmonized. As Pickering says,

It has been widely affirmed that the early Christians were either unconcerned or unable to watch over the purity of the text. . . Again a review of the premises is called for. Many of the first believers had been devout Jews who had an ingrained reverence and care for the Old Testament Scriptures which extended to the very jots and tittles. This reverence and care would naturally be extended to the New Testament Scriptures.

Why should modern critics assume that the early Christians, in particular the spiritual leaders among them, were inferior in integrity or intelligence? . . . Are we to assume that everyone who made copies of New Testament books in those early years was a knave or a fool?³⁷

As Pickering points out, a large percentage of the early Christians were Jews. They brought with them into Christianity a tradition of centuries of exact copying of the Old Testament Scriptures. It is only logical to think that this tradition would have affected their treatment of the New Testament Scriptures. But before we consider their attitude toward the New Testament, let's examine the manner in which God used the Jews to preserve the Old Testament.

The Preservation of the Old Testament

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1, 2).

Some 2,500 times, the O. T. says, "Thus saith the Lord." Other phrases, such as "And God said," and "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," abound. Clearly, these are God's Words. And they were to be regarded with the utmost solemnity.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Moses warned the Israelites that they were in no way to alter the words he spoke to them. The reason for this was plain: they were the "commandments of the Lord." Any tampering with them would cause them to cease to be God's Word; they would then be the tradition of men.

"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5, 6).

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6, 7).

God's people were taught that no corruption existed in His Word as it was in their possession. They were assured that the same God who first gave the Words would *keep* and *preserve* them for all generations. Though they knew false prophets would attempt to distort and pervert God's Word, they were confident that such efforts would never succeed in obliterating the pure Word of God.

In order to keep His promise to preserve His Word for all

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generations, God committed the Scriptures (oracles) to the nation of Israel for safekeeping. Moses, the first man chosen of God to write His Holy Word, began the preservation process by commanding that the written Word of God be placed in the safest and most Holy place in all of Israel: the Ark of the Covenant.

“And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

The second step of God’s providential preservation is twofold: It provides for all of the Israelites, adults and children, as well as the strangers in their midst, to hear all of God’s written Word read in full every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:9-11). This was protection in itself; from childhood to adulthood, an Israelite would have heard the Word read perhaps ten or twelve times. Had any corruption occurred between readings, some among the hundreds of thousands would surely have noticed it and called the Levites into question.

In anticipation of the Israelites’ demand for a king, God commanded that a copy of the entirety of the existing Word of God be made for him (Deuteronomy 17:18, 19).

During the years following the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel plunged from mountain peaks of spirituality to valleys of iniquity. During this time, some kings were less diligent than others in adhering to the Word of God. The days before King Asa are described in II Chronicles 15:3:

"Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law."

The neglect of the Word, and the restoration of the proper regard for it, can be seen in II Kings 22:8-13:

"And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, . . . saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded, . . . Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me, . . . concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."

It is thus seen that even though the Word had been neglected for many years, it was still providentially preserved in the temple, and still had the power to prick the heart and to produce revival.

Finally, because of the sinfulness of the people, Jerusalem was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, in 586 B.C. But godly men like Daniel and Ezekiel carried with them into Babylonian captivity their precious copies of God's Word. Following the captivity, the proper reverence and attention was given to the Holy Scriptures by those Jews who returned to Jerusalem.

"This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel

had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. . .For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:6, 10).

Hills describes the manner in which God’s Word was preserved from the time of Ezra until Christ:

By Ezra and his successors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the Old Testament books were gathered together into one Old Testament canon, and their texts were purged of errors and preserved until the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry. By that time the Old Testament text was so firmly established that even the Jews’ rejection of Christ could not disturb it. Unbelieving Jewish scribes transmitted this traditional Hebrew Old Testament text, blindly but faithfully, until the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. . .In the providence of God they took care of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures until at length the time was ripe for Christians to make general use of them. ³⁸

Jesus gave His divine stamp of approval to all of the Old Testament (See John 10:35; Matthew 7:12; Luke 16:31; 24:44). According to what He said in Matthew 5:18 and Luke 16:17, the text in common use at that time, which was identical to our Old Testament today, was a completely accurate reproduction of the original.

The Jewish scribes, fulfilling their God-given mandate to preserve the Old Testament Scriptures, developed a detailed plan to insure the accuracy of each copy.

When they wrote the name of God in any form they were to reverently wipe their pen, and wash their whole body before writing Jehovah lest that holy name should be tainted even in writing. The new copy was examined and carefully checked with the original also immediately, and it is said that if only one incorrect letter was discovered the whole copy was rejected. Each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript, written with a special kind of ink, upon skins made from a clean animal. The writer had to pronounce aloud each word before writing it. In no case was the word to be written from memory. They counted, not only the words, but every letter, and how many times each letter occurred, and compared it with the original.

They ascertained the middle letter of the Pentateuch, the middle clause and letter of each book, and how many times each letter of the alphabet occurs in all the Hebrew scriptures. Thus, Aleph (A) they tell us, occurs 42,377 times, Beth (B) 32,218 times. This shows how unlikely it is that any considerable change could occur when making copies of the sacred scriptures, when the intent and purpose of the writer was guided by a motive to please God."

The careful copying of the Old Testament by the scribes continued until the invention of the printing press, which, of course, roughly coincided with the Reformation (an evidence of God's providence). The first of the scribes were called Tannaim (Teachers). They were succeeded by the Amoraim (Expositors), who gave way to the Masoretes (Traditionalists). The Masoretes, from the sixth century on, took every precaution to preserve the Old Testament without error. Theirs was the first Hebrew Old Testament text ever printed.

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With this background, we can see the care and watchfulness the New Testament Jewish Christians would have brought into the church. But did they recognize the writings of the apostles and disciples as Scripture, or did they, as many modern critics suggest, “feel free to change the text” because they had no “sense of copying Scripture”?

The Early Attitude Toward New Testament Writings

Colwell joins his voice with those who suggest that the early Christians failed to recognize the inspiration of the New Testament writings.

Most of the Bible was not written as Bible, nor did its first readers read it as Bible. When Paul wrote to his churches, he was so far from expecting that his letters would be accepted as equal in authority to the Jewish Scriptures that he sometimes despaired of having his wishes carried out.⁴⁰

Does Colwell's view square with Scripture itself? Would the fervent New Testament Christians have treated lightly writings which contained such solemn phrases as these?

“The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Corinthians 14:37).

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (II Thessalonians 3:14).

“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (II Peter 3:2).

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life. . ." (Revelation 22:18, 19).

For the early Christians to have treated the writings of the apostles and disciples as lightly as required by the view of Hort, Greenlee, Colwell, etc., it would have been necessary for them to either totally disregard the internal witness of the writings, or to consider the books spurious. It is difficult to see how they could have read claims and warnings like the above and then have done any less than their utmost to see that the text passed to them was preserved perfectly in every detail.

The Apostle Paul claimed to write the commandments of the Lord (I Corinthians 14:37). This was such a bold statement that it could not have had application only to some limited portion of Paul's correspondence. If Paul had not meant to imply that *all* he wrote were the words of God, he would have had to spell that out very carefully. If some of his writings were *not* the commandments of the Lord, he would have had to spell out clearly which ones were and which weren't; it would have been dangerous and harmful to allow the New Testament church to attach divine inspiration to a humanly conceived document. But Paul was bold in his assertion for the very reason that his letters were inspired of God; indeed, they were the *commandments of the Lord*. This, immediately, blankets some 50% of the New Testament with a claim to inspiration and infallibility.

The Apostle John made a similar claim (Revelation 22:18, 19). In a manner reminiscent of the Old Testament warnings (which is, of course, to be expected, since both the Old and New were inspired by the same God), John proclaimed the danger of altering,

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in any way, the words he had written; it was a matter of salvation.

The Apostle Peter joined Paul in identifying the latter's writings as Scripture:

“Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (II Peter 3:15, 16).

Peter placed the letters of Paul on the same level with the “other scriptures.” Peter also claimed equal authority with the holy prophets for himself and all the apostles (II Peter 3:2).

Paul accredited the gospels as Scripture by placing Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 side by side as equals:

“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (I Timothy 5:18).

But in our quest for the attitude of the early Christians toward New Testament Scripture, we must not forget the advance testimony of Jesus Christ.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:12, 13).

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Jesus approved the future writings of His apostles and disciples in advance. He revealed the following facts:

1. He had many more things to say, but His followers were not ready to hear them.
2. The Spirit of Truth, yet to come, would guide them into *all* truth. In other words, there would be no error in that which He directed them to do.
3. The Spirit of Truth is not independent of God, but speaks the voice of God.
4. The Spirit of Truth would reveal future events, i.e. prophecy, to them.
5. The disciples would be supernaturally empowered by the Holy Ghost to remember everything Jesus had said.

As indicated by the fifth point above, the words that Jesus had spoken would form an indivisible part of the Scriptures to be written after His ascension. That His words were the words of God, inspired, infallible, and reliable, is seen in His own statements:

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

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There is no question that the internal witness of the New Testament testifies that the early Christians would have had the highest regard for the writings of the apostles and disciples. If they gave any heed to the advance statements made by Jesus, and to the claim by the writers themselves, they must have accorded the new writings equal status with the old. They would have revered them in concurrence with the view of the New Testament itself toward Scripture:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16).

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved hy the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:20, 21).

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12, 13).

But how did these New Testament Christians go about preserving the text of these new writings? First, we must remember the extreme care the Jewish scribes took to preserve the Old Testament perfectly, diligence which extended to every jot and tittle. Then, we must recognize that nearly all the early Christians were Jewish. These converts to Christianity brought with them the highest regard

for the Scriptures, and a thorough knowledge, gained through the centuries, of the proper methods of transmitting them through copies. Their conversion would not have weakened their resolve to preserve perfectly every Word of God; it would have strengthened it. When they, by the indwelling Spirit of God, grasped the significance of the Scriptures, they would have redoubled every effort to provide accurate copies for use in public worship and private devotion. Indeed, many of the early Jewish converts were former priests (Acts 6:7). They would certainly not have been any less diligent in their concern for the preservation of the New Testament than they were for the Old Testament.

The unconverted Jewish priesthood was obviously not concerned with the preservation of the writings of the apostles and disciples. But God had made provisions that the contents of the New Testament would be preserved for all generations. Hills explains:

. . .The Old Testament Church was under the care of the divinely appointed Aaronic priesthood, and for this reason the Holy Spirit preserved the Old Testament through this priesthood and the scholars that grouped themselves around it. . .In the New Testament Church, on the other hand, this special priesthood has been abolished through the sacrifice of Christ. Every believer is a priest before God, and for this reason the Holy Spirit has preserved the New Testament text not through any special priesthood but through the *universal priesthood of believers*, that is, through the usage of God's people, the rank and file of all those that truly trust in Christ.⁴¹

While the apostles were alive, there would have been a clear understanding among true believers as to which books were inspired. The Apostle Paul, for example, addressed the matter of forged letters:

“Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (II Thessalonians 2:2).

One major test as to what was Scripture is seen in the same chapter: “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” (II Thessalonians 2:5). The test was simply this: All Scripture had to conform to previous apostolic pronouncements. There could be no disparity between letters purporting to be authentic and previous letters, or even between new letters and vocal lessons taught by the apostles. Paul spoke more at length on this subject when he wrote to the Galatians:

“There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:7-9).

The theory that the early Christians would have been to any degree careless in the task of the transmission of the New Testament Scriptures does not square with the only tangible facts of the case: the Scriptures themselves. There is no evidence either that they failed to recognize the early writings as Scripture.

The early church fathers, following the death of the last apostle, continued to perpetuate the same regard for the perfect preservation of the Scriptures. Polycarp said, “Whoever perverts the sayings of the Lord. . .that one is the firstborn of Satan.”⁴² Within one hundred years of the death of the apostles, a heretic named Marcion corrupted the Word of God by making copies in which

he shortened some books and ignored others. He was soundly condemned by Irenaeus.⁴³ In fact, Irenaeus was so concerned that the text be preserved perfectly that he defended the traditional reading of a single letter.⁴⁴ Justin Martyr also condemned Marcion by saying, ". . . the wicked demons have also put forward Marcion of Pontus."⁴⁵ Tertullian, near the year 208, seemed to claim that the original MSS written by the apostles, or their exact copies, were still being read.⁴⁶

Hills sees three steps in the providential preservation of the New Testament text:

. . . *First*, many trustworthy copies of the original New Testament manuscripts were produced by faithful scribes. *Second*, these trustworthy copies were read and recopied by true believers down through the centuries. *Third*, untrustworthy copies were not so generally read or so frequently recopied.⁴⁷

It would be a strange thing indeed to think that the Almighty God would miraculously impart His infallible Word and then abandon that Word without continually intervening to preserve its accuracy. This reasoning would indicate that it was important only that those to whom God originally spoke have the inerrant Scriptures, and that all other men, in succeeding generations, would have to make do with corrupted copies. If God did not intend to preserve His Word perfectly to all generations, what would have been the need for an inerrant original?

What is the use of the inspiration of the Bible, if no form of the Bible that we now have is inspired? Why should God have worked a stupendous miracle in order to preserve the writers of the Biblical books from error and make the

autographs of their books completely true, if He intended then to leave the books thus produced to the mere chance of transmission from generation to generation by very human and often careless copyists?⁴⁸

The doctrine of inspiration *requires* the doctrine of preservation. The words of the Bible are no ordinary words; they are alive. They cannot be separated from the One Who spoke them. To suggest that they could fall into disuse and be lost is to suggest that God Himself, Who spoke the words, is somehow unable or unwilling to preserve them. But as surely as there is a God, He watched over His Word and protected it from all attempts at corruption and preserved it so that sincere, seeking men in *all* generations could read it, hear it, and thereby be born again.

Text Types

Greenlee, retracing Hort's assumption that variants came into the New Testament text at an early stage, then begins to develop the W-H theory of "text-types."

Thus by the end of the second century the "Western" text had arisen, characterized by extensive variation from the original text. Although this text is very early in origin, the principles of intrinsic probability weigh against it in general. It is generally longer than the preferred text. In a number of notable instances, however, it has a shorter reading, in which the Western text alone may have preserved the original. . . .

Did such a text ever exist? According to the theoretical approach of W-H, it is an established fact that there was indeed an

identifiable Western text. Many scholars are, however, less certain. In fact, the entire W-H structure of four basic text-types has been called into question.

...Although Hort's "Neutral" and "Alexandrian" are now generally lumped together and called "Alexandrian," and Hort's "Syrian" is now usually named "Byzantine," and the literature refers to an added text-type, "Caesarean," the notion of at least three major text-types or recensions dominates the field to this day.⁶⁹

Even within the camp of those who see distinctive text-types as identifiable, there are differences of opinion as to the relative importance and purity of each. Bruce, for example, says,

...A number of scholars have adduced weighty arguments for preferring the claims of the Western text to be regarded as the representative of the first-century text. Certainly the Western text has very ancient attestation; . . .⁷⁰

But Bruce proceeds to admit that there is a "general question of the existence of text-types at all."⁷¹ Pickering explores this general question further. He quotes Parvis:

We have reconstructed text-types and families and sub-families and in so doing have created things that never before existed on earth or in heaven. . . But when we have found that a particular manuscript would not fit into any of our nicely constructed schemes, we have thrown up our hands and said that it contained a mixed text.⁷²

Hodges goes a step further:

. . . The so-called “Western text” is so amorphous and so spasmodically and irregularly diffused through the witnesses claimed for it that its right to be called a “text-form” at all is far from established. I agree with Aland that, if we are going to talk about text-types, we can speak only of the majority form and the Egyptian. . . What we are probably looking at in the alleged Western readings is a complex phenomenon of mixture in which the versions played a major role and which had little impact at any time on the Greek manuscript tradition as a whole.⁵³

Aland, Hodges says, speaks of only two text-types, the Majority Text and the Egyptian (Alexandrian). But Jakob van Bruggen points out that even the “Egyptian text” is open to question:

. . . From the 2nd and 3rd centuries we only have papyri at our disposal. Due to climatic conditions these can practically only come to us from Egypt. For this period we, therefore, only possess representatives of Egyptian editions of the New Testament. Here we should bear in mind that Egypt was not the most flourishing part of the Church at that time. . . that the finds are incidental and restricted to certain areas, prevents us from generalizing about the New Testament text in the first centuries. . . It is not even possible to generalize about the Egyptian text of those days on the basis of this material.⁵⁴

Concerning specifically the so-called “Western” (δ) text, Kenyon says:

What we have called the δ -text. . . is not so much a text as a congeries of various readings, not descending from

any one archetype, but possessing an infinitely complicated and intricate parentage. No one manuscript can be taken as even approximately representing the δ-text, if by "text" we mean a form of the Gospel which once existed in a single manuscript.⁵⁴

E. C. Colwell joins the Nestle text (25th edition) in denying the existence of the Western text as an identifiable group.⁵⁵ Klijn declares, "such a text did not exist."⁵⁶

So both the first and second steps of W-H's theoretical history of the transmission of the text are open to serious question. Their assumptions as to the genealogical history of the MSS have never been, and indeed can never be, proven. As Colwell says, their supposed reconstruction of the transmission of the text rests upon "hypothetical manuscripts, not actual codices."⁵⁷ Pickering wonders how Hort could speak so dogmatically about the results of the genealogical method when "he had not demonstrated the existence of any such relations, much less with 'perfect certainty'?"⁵⁸

But let us return to Greenlee's summary of W-H's theoretical history:

In another area a different influence was being brought to bear upon the text. Alexandria was the home of criticism of the Greek classics. Here the New Testament MSS. were looked upon with literary eyes; the unsophisticated style of spoken Greek and the literary and grammatical imperfections of the New Testament authors were altered by stylistic changes. . . Thus the "Alexandrian" text is characterized.

So it is not claimed that the "Alexandrian" text arose from scribes who "felt free" to alter the text, nor from speedy production, nor from ignorance, but from the desire to correct the "literary

and grammatical imperfections” of the New Testament authors. How writings inspired by the Holy Spirit of God could have such imperfections is not explained. In considering Hort’s “Alexandrian” text, we must remember that subsequent scholarship has revised the estimate of the identity of the various texts so that when we speak of today’s “Alexandrian” text we are including Hort’s “Neutral” text.⁶⁰ Let us, then, also examine again Greenlee’s description of the latter:

One numerically small group of witnesses seems to have escaped the corruptions of all three other text-types and to have preserved the text virtually in its original form. This is the “Neutral” text. It is represented especially in the agreement of B and [Aleph], together with a few other witnesses. Sometimes the secondary witnesses desert the Neutral text to follow an Alexandrian variant, leaving the original text in B and Aleph with very little additional support. The text of B, moreover, is so superior that its text must always be given close attention, and in frequent instances the text of B is decisive over all other witnesses.

The text of W-H is therefore an essentially “Neutral” or “B[Aleph]” text, or even a “B” text.

Colwell conducted a careful experiment in an effort to reconstruct the Beta (Hort’s Neutral and Alexandrian) text-type. He concluded:

. . . Any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta Text-type on a quantitative basis is doomed to failure. The text thus reconstructed is not reconstructed but contructed; it is an artificial entity that never existed.⁶¹

Metzger admits, “. . . most scholars have abandoned Hort’s

optimistic view that codex Vaticanus (B) contains the original text almost unchanged except for slips of the pen. . . .”⁶²

Further weakness of the W-H “Neutral” and “Alexandrian” texts is demonstrated by Alfred Martin, who also quotes Hoskier:

There is absolutely no evidence that the so-called Neutral Text is the closest to the apostolic text, merely the assertion that this is so. Hort’s veneration for the name of Origen does not carry weight with all scholars, . . . One must not talk any longer about the “Neutral” Text unless one has studied Hoskier’s *Codex B and Its Allies* and answered his arguments. He summarizes one of these arguments in this way:

“Reiteration of Hort’s dicta by his followers is not proof. Let someone take the dozen ‘Alexandrian’ readings of B which I have adduced—the existence of which in B was denied by Hort—and prove that they are in no wise Alexandrian. Then we can discuss the matter further.”

The second volume of this significant work by Hoskier is concerned mainly with Sinaiticus and its divergences from Vaticanus. One’s faith in the “Neutral” Text ought to be shaken or strained if one would pore over the many pages which list in detail more than three thousand real differences between the texts of B and Aleph in the four Gospels alone! . . . Westcott and Hort’s “question-begging nomenclature” has been shown to be worthless. They themselves admit that Western is not a correct designation. They adduce no definite manuscript support for their so-called Alexandrian. Their Neutral is conceded by most today to be a misnomer.⁶³

We will later deal specifically with the nature of the two main MSS followed by W-H in their attempt to reconstruct the original

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text, B (Codex Vaticanus) and Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus). But for now, what of the final point in Greenlee's summary of the W-H theory: that an official ecclesiastical recension resulted in a "Syrian" text (or Byzantine)? Greenlee says,

After Christianity attained official status in the fourth century, attempts began to be made, officially or unofficially, to deal with the divergencies in the text, aiming at combining readings where appropriate, removing obscurities, harmonizing parallels, and in general to produce a smooth text free from difficulties. Thus arose the "Syrian" text, which was smooth and sensible, yet lacking in the vigor and occasional ruggedness of the original.

One would hope that Greenlee is not suggesting that the "original" was obscure, lacked harmony, was characterized by rough difficulties and ruggedness, though that seems to be what he is saying. But what is the historical evidence that such a recension ever occurred?

While Greenlee appears to have softened Hort's view somewhat, the W-H theory required an *official* revision of the text roughly during the fourth century in Antioch.

. . . Westcott and Hort. . . believed that from the very beginning the Traditional (Byzantine) Text was an *official* text with official backing and that this was the reason why it overcame all rival texts and ultimately reigned supreme in the usage of the Greek Church. They regarded the Traditional Text as the product of a thorough-going revision of the New Testament text which took place at Antioch in two stages between 250 A.D. and 350 A.D. They believed that this text was the deliberate creation of certain scholarly

Christians at Antioch and that the presbyter Lucian (d. 312) was probably the original leader in this work.⁶⁴

Hort was pressed to find some manner in which to explain the phenomenon of a "late" text becoming predominant. The theory of an official revision filled the purpose. But there is no historical proof of this theory.

Westcott and Hort's . . . "Syrian text" was the product of an official, ecclesiastical revision that spread by virtue of the ecclesiastical sanction with which it was promulgated. This view is now recognized as an historical improbability and is generally abandoned. . . . The collapse of the recensional view of the majority text, however, has left a vacuum that contemporary theorists have not been able to adequately fill.⁶⁵

As van Bruggen says, there is the "question whether historical proof can be given for the proposition that the text of the New Testament has undergone a revision in the fourth century. In the second place, the question whether the Byzantine textual tradition can be characterized as the result of such a recension."⁶⁶ He continues:

. . . Hort did not do anything more than mention the possibility that Lucianus stands at the beginning of the Byzantine text. . . . It is also not possible to prove historically that Lucianus of Antioch offered a revised text of the New Testament. . . . If the original Greek text is superseded by an inferior recension in the 4th and following centuries, then this process has left surprisingly few trails behind in the historiography.⁶⁷

It becomes increasingly clear that the entire theory of W-H rests on exceedingly unstable ground. It is by no means agreed that the attempt to recover the original wording of the New Testament can be undertaken on the same basis as that of secular literature. Pickering puts it this way:

Should the New Testament be treated just like any other book? Will the procedures used on the works of Homer or Aristotle suffice? If both God and Satan had an intense interest in the fate of the New Testament text, presumably not.⁶⁸

The entire concept of text-types by which MSS can be placed in neatly identifiable niches is seriously questioned. If there is indeed such a thing as text-types at all, it certainly is not according to the descriptive theorizing of W-H. With all of the intense efforts of scholars over the past century applied to the now extant MSS which number in excess of 5,000, only one parent-child set has been identified.⁶⁹ One would think that if Hort's theory were true, even as it has been modified by current theory, that such genealogical relationships would abound. The paucity of illustrative examples should cause all serious students to question the entire system of thought.

The three brief "rules" developed by W-H and seen in the eclecticism of today (i.e. the readings are to be preferred which are hardest, shortest, and most likely to have produced the other readings) rest on a theoretical recreation of scribal habits during the time the text was transmitted by hand. It is assumed that scribes tended to revise the text under their hand to "conflate" (Hort's term), or combine shorter readings to produce one that was fuller, to smooth out difficult passages, and to add to the text to create a more complete reading. These assumptions have been accepted as true by

many students of the text since W-H.

But, as with the other major planks of the W-H platform, this one is equally unprovable. It is also thought by many to be unreasonable. The theory is that as years passed in the transmission of the text, it tended to become more and more "conflated," or fuller, as scribes smoothed out, added to, combined readings, etc., as it passed through their hands. Thus the shorter the reading, and the more difficult, the more likely it is to be correct.

But logical thought would have it that, of the two possibilities—adding to the text or deleting from it—scribes would be far more likely to do the latter than the former.

1. Believing scribes, those who recognized that the text under their hand was the inspired Word of God, might possibly leave out a word or a line, but they would not, and in good conscience could not, add. If they did perchance add accidentally, it would be obvious, for the addition would be of the nature of repeating the same line twice.

2. Scribes who were mere copyists and who did not know the language could also accidentally leave something out, but would find it quite impossible to add even one word. Again, if they did add, it would be quite obvious.

3. The only scribes who could conceivably add to the text would be unbelieving scribes, but what motive could they have to "smooth out" the text? In order to do this (to combine readings, or conflate), they would have to be scholars of the Scripture (to know by heart the various readings), and unbelieving scribes would not likely fulfill that requirement.

4. No orthodox scribe would have wanted to tamper with the text. No unorthodox scribe would have left it as flawless as it was. No scribe ignorant of the language would have been able to do anything but leave out, unless he recopied lines twice, which would

be an obvious, and unintentional, scribal error.

The shifting sand of naturalistic and theoretical recreations of the transmission of the text is seen in Colwell's about-face. First, the position he took in 1937:

. . . The various books which make up our Bible today were not accepted as Bible the moment they were written. The safeguards which sanctity throws around the content of a Bible were not applied to our books until they were at least a hundred years old. . . to a large extent in the New Testament, the cult itself lacked the organization, the trained individuals, and the interest necessary to preserve the exact wording of the documents. . . in part it was due to the lack of educated and trained scribes in the service of the cult. The Hebrews were not a literary people; the early Christians came from the lower classes.⁷⁰

Now Colwell in 1952:

Most of the manuals and handbooks now in print (including mine!) will tell you that these variations were the fruit of careless treatment which was possible because the books of the New Testament had not yet attained a strong position as "Bible." The reverse is the case. It was because they were the religious treasure of the church that they were changed.⁷¹

A much safer, and exceedingly more Biblical, position to take is that the Almighty God not only inspired His Word, but that He watched over it in a supernatural fashion to preserve it intact for all generations. Certainly there are corrupted texts; without question some scribes purposefully altered readings. But in the

providence of God, the vast majority of MSS extant today preserve the same text. Is it sensible to reject the testimony of the thousands for the shadowy witness of the few?

Conflation: A Pseudo-Issue

Another major building block in W-H's theory which prompted them to reject the mass of testimony of the MSS in favor of a few early copies was "conflation." Hort's definition was:

... "Conflate," that is, not simple substitutions of the reading of one document for that of another, but combinations of the readings of both documents into a composite whole, sometimes by mere addition with or without a conjunction, sometimes with more or less of fusion.⁷³

Thus, if a scribe sat with two or more MSS with differing readings before him, it is supposed that he may have combined various readings to produce a "fuller" text. If this were true, it would naturally mean that the conflated copy was of a later date than either of the MSS from which it was taken. Since the Hortian theory presupposes that the Majority Text is a late text, it follows that the shorter readings must be earlier! In other words, the theory holds that, through the passing of years, a longer text developed as the readings of shorter texts were combined.

What evidence did Hort present to support his theory? Typically, very little. He characterized the whole text of the *Textus Receptus* as being conflate on the basis of eight examples! Each of these was taken from just two books, Mark and Luke. As Pickering has said, "To characterize a whole text for the whole New Testament on the basis of eight examples is foolish."⁷⁴

Adherents of Hort's view often speak of conflation as if the

New Testament abounded with examples. But where are they? Neither Harrison, Kenyon, nor Lake produces any, though Kenyon refers to a work by E. A. Hutton. After examination, that work, at the most, suggests only four additional examples.⁷⁴

Another quite simple, and much more reasonable, explanation for the origin of shorter and fuller readings is available. Rather than supposing that a scribe, with two variant readings before him, conflated, or combined, the two (or more), it is much more sensible to suppose that a scribe copying a MS, whether accidentally or intentionally, *omitted* a few words or a phrase. This can easily happen when phrases have similar endings. His mistake would have been repeated by a copyist working exclusively from his MS.

If this is not the true explanation, how do we explain different readings? Did a scribe *invent* a reading and substitute it for the true reading? No, it is much more credible that a scribe could have left out a reading, rather than adding one.

. . . Where the required phenomena for a conflation are present (and this is extremely rare), it must be demonstrated that the two shorter readings did not arise through independent omissions of different parts of the longer reading before it can be asserted that conflation took place. Apart from such demonstration it is not fair to assume a conflation and then build a theory upon it. Hort's total demonstration relative to Luke 24:53, is "The simple instance needs no explanation."⁷⁵

Luke 24:53 is one of Hort's eight "examples" of conflation: "And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." This is the reading of all but six of the extant Greek MSS. D, however, does not have "and blessing." Hort's explanation is essentially that it is so "simple [it] needs no explanation"! Clearly,

this is no answer at all.

As Pickering says,

. . . It is not unreasonable to suspect that in verse 53
D has omitted "and blessing" from the original "praising
and blessing" rather than that the reading of all but six
of the extant Greek MSS is a conflation.⁷³

Essential to Hort's theory of conflation is that no example of inversion (a case in which either the "Neutral" or the "Western" text contains a conflation from the other plus the "Syrian") be found. Thus, he stated that such inversions do not exist.⁷⁴ As Pickering points out, this is "fatal to Hort's purpose. He claimed that inversions do not exist; but they do."⁷⁵

Van Bruggen carries it a step further:

It would not be difficult to "prove", with the aid of specially chosen examples from other text-types, that those types are also guilty of harmonizing, conflating readings and smoothing the diction. Here illustrations do not prove anything. After all, one could without much difficulty give a large number of examples from the Byzantine text to support the proposition that this text does not harmonize and does not smooth away.⁷⁶

Thus, another primary corner stone crumbles beneath the textual theory underlying all modern versions.

. . . The whole matter of "conflation" is a pseudo-issue, a tempest in a teapot. There simply are not enough putative examples to support generalizations.⁷⁷

All evidence points to the fact that the Majority Text, and the translations based on it, principally the KJV, have not *added* to the Word of God. Rather, the Minority Text, and the modern translations based upon it, have *taken away*.

¹J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 78.

²*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1970 ed., s.v. "Hort, Fenton John Anthony."

³Ibid.

⁴Fowler, *Evaluating Versions*, p. 4.

⁵Ibid., pp. 1, 2.

⁶David Otis Fuller, *Which Bible?*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), p. 278.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 279.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 280.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 282.

¹⁵Pickering, *Identity*, p. 31.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 31, 32.

¹⁷*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1970 ed., s.v. "Hort, Fenton John Anthony."

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"A "Pieta" is a statue of a Virgin and dead Christ.

"Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 278.

"Ibid., p. 280.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 31.

"Quoted by Zane C. Hedges in "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 2 (June 1978): 144.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 28.

"Quoted by Pickering in *ibid.*, p. 29.

"Fowler, *Evaluating*, p. 9.

"Ibid., p. 4.

"Ernest Cadman Colwell, *The Study of the Bible*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, First Phoenix Edition, 1964), pp. 39-40.

"Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 3rd ed. (Des Moines, Iowa: Christian Research Press, 1979), p. 2.

"Ibid., p. 3.

"Greenlee, *Introduction*, p. 78.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 32.

"Greenlee, *Introduction*, pp. 80-81.

"Metzger, *Text*, p. 14.

"Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the *Textus Receptus*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 1 (March 1978): 26.

"Ibid., p. 27.

"Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Rejoinder," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 2 (June 1978): 158.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 106.

"Hills, *Defended*, p. 93.

"Jasper James Ray, *God Wrote Only One Bible* (Junction City, OR: Eye Opener Publishers, 1955), pp. 94, 95.

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⁴⁰Colwell, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 3, 4.

⁴¹Hills, *Defended*, p. 91.

⁴²Pickering, *Identity*, p. 107.

⁴³Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 2.

⁴⁴Pickering, *Identity*, p. 108.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 108-9.

⁴⁷Hills, *Defended*, p. 106.

⁴⁸Fuller, *Counterfeit*, p. 178.

⁴⁹Pickering, *Identity*, p. 34.

⁵⁰F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, 3rd rev. ed. (London and Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., Revell Co., Westwood, N.J., 1963), p. 188.

⁵¹Ibid., n. 1.

⁵²Pickering, *Identity*, p. 48.

⁵³Zane C. Hodges, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *JETS* 21, no. 2. (June 1978): 151.

⁵⁴Jakob van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, trans. C. Kleijn (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Premier Printing Ltd., 1976), pp. 25, 26.

⁵⁵Pickering, *Identity*, p. 50.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 44, 45.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 51.

⁶²Metzger, *Text*, p. 216.

⁶³Fuller, *Which Bible?*, pp. 164-65.

⁶⁴Hills, *Defended*, p. 178.

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"Hedges, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *JETS* 21 no. 2 (June 1978): 147.

"Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, p. 17.

"*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 41.

"*Ibid.*, p. 44.

"Colwell, *Study of the Bible*, pp. 45, 46.

"Quoted in Pickering, *Identity*, p. 42.

"*Ibid.*, p. 34.

"*Ibid.*, p. 58.

"*Ibid.*, p. 59.

"*Ibid.*, p. 61.

"*Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

"*Ibid.*, p. 35.

"*Ibid.*, p. 60.

"Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, pp. 30, 31.

"Pickering, *Identity*, p. 62.

Two Bibles From Which To Choose

As we noted in Chapter One, the fundamental difference between the KJV and the other English translations rendered since 1611 is that of the underlying text, and specifically the Greek text of the New Testament. Though there are many translations, there are really only two Bibles, for there are basically only two texts. The most important question of all, then, before we can even consider the relative merits of various translations, is "*which text is the Word of God?*" If the text is erroneous, the finest translation in the world will be to no avail. As Burgon said, "...if the underlying Greek Text be mistaken, what else but incorrect must the English Translation be?"¹

The first stream of texts that we will consider is the Majority Text (also called Byzantine, Koine, Traditional, Received, Textus Receptus), so called because 80-90% of all extant MSS reflect such a text. This is the text reflected in the KJV. Greenlee admits that only about 5% of the extant MSS differ appreciably from the Byzantine text.²

The second stream of texts (perhaps we should call it a trickle) can be characterized as the Minority Text. It is, obviously, made up of the remainder of the extant MSS outside of the majority camp. But that gives even too much numerical value to this text, because, in the final analysis, textual criticism relies on a mere handful of MSS to formulate the reading of the modern, eclectic texts. Indeed, it sometimes comes down to *one* MS. "The text of W-H is. . .an essentially. . .'B[Aleph]' text, or even a 'B' text."³ What Greenlee means by this is that W-H often made their decisions on the basis of two MSS alone, and if these two contradicted one another (which they often do), on the basis of one MS alone, codex Vaticanus (B)! And, as we have seen, the Greek texts developed since W-II follow almost totally the same procedure.

Bruce sums up the basic difference between the AV and the modern versions:

The Authorized Version of 1611 represents, by and large, the Byzantine text. The Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901, which were produced under the influence of Westcott and Hort's textual theory and work, represent in the main the Alexandrian text. The Revised Standard Version of 1946 reflects the views of contemporary textual scholars, who have traced the various early lines of textual transmission back to the second century, and represents an eclectic text, each variant reading of the second-century textual types being considered on its merits, without marked preference being given to any single one of these types.⁴

Bruce's statement might lead one to believe that the more recent versions represent yet a third text, but one would be mistaken to think so. The differences between the current texts (Nestle-Aland,

URSGNT, etc.) when compared with the text of W-H are minor. And to say that a translation is based on an eclectic text is, as we have seen, simply saying that the translators selected readings from various texts to create a new text which never really existed anywhere!

Did Nestle himself believe that his text was most faithful to the original? Van Bruggen says,

The text of Nestle was not drawn up at the time as a best possible copy of the original text. Eberhard Nestle did nothing more than give an edition in which one could find the mean of some modern text-editions: Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort and Weiss. It appears from the Einführung which Nestle wrote, that he personally still saw many unanswered questions. . . This same Nestle, besides his well-known mean-text, also took care of the fourth impression of Scriveners edition of the Stephanus-text of 1550: a form of the so-called *textus receptus*. It was certainly not intended that his well-known text should become a sort of standard for the 20th century.²

So it is seen that one of the primary current texts, that of Nestle, was never in the beginning intended to represent in itself some definite, identifiable text that actually existed at some point in time; it was simply a "mean-text" of others which had gone before! What progress has been made on the Nestle text since that time?

The initial plan of Aland to offer a new, scientifically determined text in the 26th edition of Nestle, has been abandoned. . . This again means an acquiescence in a *comensus-text* which has been determined on the basis of uncertainty. This time no mean from three modern text-

editions, like the older Nestle, but the mean of the opinions of five modern textual-critics. Aland, Black, Martini, Metzger, Wikgren together have established a text by majority-vote. . . That they did not unanimously arrive at a text, is also not surprising. At present there is no certainty concerning the history of the textual tradition.⁶

Rather than progressing, then, the science of textual criticism is retrogressing. Whereas the first Nestle was the mean of three other texts, the present Nestle is yet another text determined by majority vote of five scholars. This describes for us as well the identity of the UBSGNT, for its third edition is the same as that of the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle.⁷

Indeed, the one thing upon which the modern textual critics agree unanimously is that the Word of God is *not* to be found in the vast majority of extant MSS; it must be somewhere among the minority.

One can even say that the modern textual criticism of the New Testament is based on the one fundamental conviction that the true text of the New Testament is at least *not* found in the great majority of the manuscripts. The text which the Greek church has read for more than 1000 years, and which the churches of the Reformation have followed for centuries in their Bible translations, is now with certainty regarded as defective and deficient: a text to be rejected. . . the text of centuries is replaced by the text of yesterday: the Nestle text.⁸

On one side of the issue stands the Majority Text, with its KJV, on the other the Minority Text, with its modern versions. The Majority Text is a *full* text; the Minority Text is a *short* text. The Minority

Text omits major portions of material included in the Majority Text (e.g. John 7:53 - 8:11; Mark 16:9-20; Matthew 18:11; 17:21; Mark 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 23:17; 24:12; 24:40; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 9:5, 6; 24:6-8; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7; plus many other portions of verses, phrases, and words).

Obviously, one of these texts is wrong. The Word of God forbids adding one word, or taking away one word. Either the Majority Text has added, or the Minority Text has subtracted. And if we take seriously the warnings of Scripture, we must determine which is the correct text. Unless we, today, have the pure Word of God, there is no way we can live by every Word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Unless we have the *uncorrupted* Word, there is no way we can be born again (1 Peter 1:23). The Scriptures form one single unit; if any is added, or taken away, it ceases to be the Word of God and becomes the word of fallible men.

There is no escaping the fact that if the Minority Text, developed primarily from only two MSS, codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, is the pure Word of God, *true Christians were for a millennium and a half without God's true Word!* Many conservative scholars (but thankfully not all!) have been caught up on the bandwagon, accepting the theory of textual criticism developed by W-H. Since they do not believe that God kept His promise to preserve His Word to all generations through the majority of Greek MSS, they must come up with alternate explanations as to how God kept His promise. Hills addresses the three basic alternative views.

(1) *The alleged agreement of all the New Testament manuscripts in matters of doctrine...most conservatives place great stress on the amount of agreement alleged to exist among the extant New Testament manuscripts. These manuscripts, it is said, agree so closely with one another in matters of doctrine that it does not make much difference*

which manuscript you follow. The same essential teaching is preserved in them all.⁹

Greenlee is seen using this argument when he says, "the traditional text is not a 'had' or heretical text; it presents the same Christian message as the critical text."¹⁰ Earlier, however, he said of the Textus Receptus, "it is far from the original text."¹¹ Herein is seen the dilemma: How can we say a text is not "had," if it is "far from the original"? Are we to understand that it is not important that we have *every Word of God*? Are *concepts* important, but not *words*? Is a text "not bad" as long as it contains the general idea of what God has said? Many, doubtless, would argue that any text that deviates from the original, God-breathed words is bad.

Even John R. Rice, the well-known fundamentalist, accepts this view of God's method of preserving His Word:

The differences in the translations are so minor, so insignificant, that we can be sure not a single doctrine, not a single statement of fact, not a single command or exhortation, has been missed in our translations. . .if the Word of God is not perfectly portrayed in one translation, it is portrayed, surely, in the winnowed sum of them all.¹²

The key words for us to consider, as Hills says, are "in matters of doctrine" and "essential teaching." This attempt by some conservatives to explain their acceptance of the W-H theory cannot escape the predicament thus created: not every Word of God is necessary; only *essential* teaching is important. Rice claims the differences are "minor," "insignificant," and that if God's Word is not found in one translation, surely it is found in them all! But what man among us is qualified to say what is the *essential* portion of God's Word and what is not? Who can say what difference

is minor and insignificant? Are we to sit in judgment on God's Word, declaring this part necessary, but that part dispensable? Can we safely disregard one jot or tittle, consoling ourselves that surely that doctrine thus affected will be found elsewhere?

But are the differences really minor? Let's briefly compare a few verses from the KJV and the NIV. The comparisons could just as easily be made between the KJV and any other modern translation.

Matthew 17:21

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."-KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 20 to v. 22. V. 21 is relegated to the status of a footnote.

Matthew 18:11

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."-KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 10 to v. 12. V. 11 is relegated to the status of a footnote.

Matthew 23:14

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."-KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 13 to v. 15. V. 14 is relegated to the status of a footnote.

Mark 11:26

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."-KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 25 to v. 27. V. 26 is relegated to the status of a footnote.

Mark 15:28

“And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.”—KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 27 to v. 29. V. 28 is relegated to the status of a footnote, which reads, “and the scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘He was counted with the lawless ones.’” Herein is seen another weakness of the modern versions: Frequently the New Testament Scripture does not match the Old Testament. This is a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12, which in the NIV reads, “was numbered with the transgressors,” rather than, “was counted with the lawless ones.” The KJV of Isaiah 53:12 reads as does the inspired New Testament: “he was numbered with the transgressors.”

Mark 16:9-20

The KJV contains all twenty verses, without question.

The NIV contains all twenty verses, but precedes them with the statement, “The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9-20.” The two MSS spoken of here are B and Aleph. Above this claim is a black line, clearly dividing the verses in question from those above.

The case of Mark 16:9-20 calls for further discussion, for it is so typical of the manner in which modern versions call portions of the Scripture into question.

Neither Westcott nor Hort believed that Mark 16:9-20 was genuine Scripture. Their sole authority was that the passage does not appear in B and Aleph. Practically all modern translations since the Revised Version follow dutifully in the steps of W-H.

The RSV ends Mark 16 with verse 8, and the words, ". . . for they were afraid." A footnote declares, "Other texts and versions add . . . 16:9-20."

Perhaps some would object, "What is the harm of adding footnotes to state the facts of the case as to the reading of various MSS?" The harm is this: *By relegating portions of Scripture to the status of a footnote, it is IMPLIED that the reading included in the text has superior support.* This is untrue. As we shall see (and the same is true not just in this case, but all others as well), the support for the reading adopted by W-H and the modern versions is vastly inferior to that of the Traditional Text.

The audacity of the NIV's statement, "The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9-20," is astonishing. The two MSS spoken of, B and Aleph, certainly do omit the verses in question, but it is *not* true that they are the "most reliable" MSS. This is merely an *opinion*, based on absolutely no factual data. Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) is corrupted by omissions, plain and clear errors, and the hands of ten different correctors are seen attempting to redeem it. And at precisely the point where the verses should appear in B (Codex Vaticanus), the copyist left a blank column (the only such column in the MSS) of just the right size to contain verses 9-20!

The older MS. from which Cod. B was copied must have infallibly contained the twelve verses in dispute. The copyist was instructed to leave them out,—and he obeyed: but he prudently left a blank space in memoriam rei. Never was blank more intelligible! Never was silence more eloquent! By this simple expedient, strange to relate, the Vatican Codex is made to refute itself even while it seems to be bearing testimony against the concluding verses of S. Mark's Gospel, by withholding them: for it forbids the

inference which, under ordinary circumstances, must have been drawn from that omission. It does more. By *leaving room* for the verses it omits, it brings into prominent notice at the end of fifteen centuries and a half, *a more ancient witness than itself*. The venerable Author of the original Codex from which Codex B was copied, is thereby brought to view. And thus, our supposed adversary (Codex B) proves our most useful ally: for it procures us the testimony of an hitherto unsuspected witness.¹³

So one of the “most reliable” MSS is found to witness to the genuineness of the verses in an unexpected fashion. Is B otherwise reliable? Burgon declares:

It bears traces of careless transcription in every page. The mistakes which the original transcriber made are of perpetual recurrence. “They are chiefly omissions, of one, two, or three words; but sometimes of half a verse, a whole verse, or even of several verses. . . I hesitate not to assert that it would be easier to find a folio containing three or four such omissions than to light on one which should be without any.” In the Gospels alone, Codex B leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times: of which by far the largest proportion is found in S. Mark’s Gospel. . .the codex is disfigured throughout with *repetitions*. The original scribe is often found to have not only written the same words twice over, but to have failed whenever he did so to take any notice with his pen of what he had done.¹⁴

What of the other of the two “reliable” MSS?

Codex Sinaiticus. . .abounds with “errors of the eye and

pen, to an extent not unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance." On many occasions, 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. "Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, . . . whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament. Tregelles has freely pronounced that 'the state of the text, as proceeding from the first scribe, may be regarded as *very rough*.' " But when "the first scribe" and his "*very rough*" performance have been thus unceremoniously disposed of, one would like to be informed what remains to command respect in Codex Aleph?"¹⁵

The NASB, still following W-H after nearly one hundred years, places Mark 16:9-20 in brackets. Phillips labels these verses as "An Ancient Appendix," thus suggesting they were added by someone at a later date. Moffatt offers two endings, "a" and "b," saying of "a" (verses 9-20), "The following appendix represents a couple of second century attempts to complete the gospel." TEV likewise offers two "Old Endings." The Amplified Bible, while including the verses, says in a footnote, "Verses 9 to 20 not in the two earliest manuscripts."

Should we not allow the footnotes to "declare the facts of the case"? How could there be any harm in simply stating the "truth"? The point is this: None of the footnotes in the modern versions state the full facts, or tell the whole truth! In a few brief words, or lines, precious portions of Holy Writ are disposed of and destructive doubts are planted.

What are the facts of ancient authority for Mark 16:9-20?
It was not until the second edition of Griesbach's work

(1796-1806) that these verses began to be called into question. He was the first to claim that they were spurious. At the time, one lone MS, Codex B, stood as a witness for omitting the verses. Codex Aleph was not yet discovered.

But while “all the naturalistic critics agree that with this verse [Mark 16:8] the genuine portion of Mark’s Gospel ends,” that is where their agreement stops.¹⁶ Few believe that Mark intentionally ended his gospel there. Some suppose he died before he was able to complete the work, or that the last page of his book was torn off, and the original reading was lost forever. The latter, of course, overlooks the divine origin and preservation of the Scriptures. Certainly God would not have allowed Mark to die before he finished the work God inspired him to do, nor would the Almighty have permitted the loss of any portion of His Word. History also testifies to the fact that Mark lived to publish his gospel.¹⁷

What documents omit this passage? Only two Greek MSS, as we have already seen, Aleph and B. Of these two, B leaves a blank column exactly the size needed to include the verses. These MSS are joined in excluding the passage by the Sinaitic Syriac MS, the Adysh and Opiza MSS of the Old Georgian version, and eight MSS of the Armenian version (Colwell has enlarged the Armenian MSS omitting the verses to sixty-two in number). The Old Latin MS *k*, and the Greek MSS L, Psi, and a few others have an alternative “short ending.”¹⁸

On the other side of the issue, Mark 16:9-20 is found in ALL the Greek MSS except Aleph and B, and in ALL the Latin MSS except *k*. This passage is found in ALL the Syriac versions except the Sinaitic Syriac, and also in the Boharic version.¹⁹

To determine the correct text of the New Testament, three main witnesses are the MSS, the versions, and the Fathers. In addition, the lectionaries used by the early church render valuable testimony, for they reprint portions of Scripture for use in worship.

In the case of Mark 16:9-20, what do these witnesses say?

(1) The earliest of the Fathers.—(2) the most venerable of the Versions.—(3) the oldest MS. of which we can obtain any tidings.—all are observed to recognize these Verses... the last shadow of pretext has vanished for maintaining with Tischendorf that 'Mark the Evangelist knew nothing of these verses':—with Tregelles that 'The book of Mark himself extends no further than ἐφοβούντο γάρ':—with Griesbach that 'the last leaf of the original Gospel was probably torn away.' . . . It is high time, I say, that this case was dismissed.²⁰

Ambrose (A.D. 374-397), Chrysostom (A.D. 400), Jerome (A.D. 331-420), Augustine, Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria (both before A.D. 430), and Hesychius of Jerusalem all testify to the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20.²¹

The Peshitto, the Curetonian Syriac, the Latin Vulgate, the Gothic of Ulphilas, the Memphitic, the Thebaic, and Italic are all versions which lend their witness to the inspiration of this portion of Scripture. In addition, five Greek writers, one Syriac, and two Latin Fathers from the fourth century (the same time frame of B and Aleph) give evidence of their acquaintance with the final eleven verses of Mark.²²

What does the fourth witness, the lectionaries, have to say about these verses? Their consistent testimony is that Mark 16:9-20 is the Word of God.

. . . The said Lectionaries of the Greek and of the Syrian Churches, the twelve concluding verses of S. Mark which are the subject of discussion. . . are observed invariably to occupy the same singularly conspicuous, as well as most

honourable place. . . . The Lesson for Matins on *Ascension-Day* in the East, in the oldest documents to which we have access, consisted (as it now does) of *the last Twelve Verses*, neither more nor less,—of S. Mark’s Gospel. . .such a weight of public testimony as this to the last Twelve Verses of a Gospel is simply overwhelming. . .“*the LAST TWELVE VERSES of the Gospel according to S. Mark*” from the very first are found to have won for themselves not only an entrance, a lodgment, an established place; but, *the place of highest honour*,—an audience on two of the Church’s chiefest Festivals.²³

In view of such a preponderance of evidence that Mark 16:9-20 is indeed the original ending of Mark’s gospel, how did such esteemed and learned scholars come to take the opposing view?

The plain truth is this:—These eminent persons have taken their information at second-hand,—partly from Griesbach, partly from Scholz,—without suspicion and without inquiry. But then they have slightly misrepresented Scholz; and Scholz (1830) slightly misunderstood Griesbach; and Griesbach (1796) took liberties with Wetstein; and Wetstein (1751) made a few serious mistakes.²⁴

When it comes to a challenge to the eternal, Holy Word of God, by which we must live, we can have no “second-hand” information; we can allow no question to pass without “suspicion and inquiry.” There is no room for “misrepresentation,” “misunderstanding,” “liberties,” and “mistakes.” *We must know exactly what God said!*

If we can find the pure, uncorrupted Word of God only in the

original writings—as they came directly from the hands of holy men—then we are today without God's Word! Such is not the case, however. God has kept and preserved His Word for all generations, and not in a small number of questionable documents, covered with plain errors. He has preserved it in the Majority Text, which gives abundant testimony to Mark 16:9-20.

Back, now, to our comparison.

Luke 17:36

"Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."—KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 35 to v. 37. V. 36 is relegated to the status of a footnote.

Luke 23:42

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—KJV

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."—NIV

The great majority of MSS have the word "Lord," which is dropped by the NIV and most other modern versions.

John 3:13

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."—KJV

"No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man."—NIV

A footnote reads, "Some manuscripts *Man, who is in heaven.*

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—KJV

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”—NIV

A footnote reads, “Or his only begotten Son.” Herein is seen another enigma of the new versions: If it could also be translated “only begotten,” why not translate it that way in the text? Relegation to a footnote implies it is an inferior translation. To say that Jesus is God’s “only begotten” Son clearly demonstrates His deity; to say “one and only” Son does not. Neither is the latter consistent with the remainder of Scripture: Believers are God’s sons (II Corinthians 6:18).

John 5:4

“For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.”—KJV

The NIV goes directly from v. 3 to v. 5. A footnote reads, “Some manuscripts *paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters*; some less important manuscripts continue *From time to time an angel of the Lord.* . . .”

What is the MS evidence at this point? “. . . Concerning St. John 5:3, 4, to which there really attaches no matter of doubt. . . we find the following: thirty-two precious words in that place are indeed omitted by Aleph B C and twenty-seven by D. . . . On the other hand, they are found in all other copies. They are vouched for by the Syriac and Latin Versions; in the Apostolic Constitutions, by Chrysostom, Cyril, Didymus, and Ammonius; among the Greeks, by Tertullian; among the Latins by Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. Why a passage so attested

is to be assumed an after-thought of the Evangelist has never yet been explained. Nor will it ever be.²³

John 6:47

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."—KJV

"I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life."—NIV

The great majority of MSS include the words "on me." The NIV leaves us to wonder who, or what, is to be the object of our faith. This is simply another of the nearly 6,000 changes wrought in the Greek text by modern textual criticism.

John 6:69

"And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—KJV

"We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."—NIV

John 9:35

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"—KJV

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'"—NIV

Three thousand MSS read "Son of God." Three read "Son of Man."

Acts 8:37

"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."—KJV

The Search for the Word of God

The NIV goes directly from v. 36 to v. 38. V. 37 is relegated to a footnote.

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”—KJV

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”—NIV

Romans 14:10

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”—KJV

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.”—NIV

Colossians 1:14

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”—KJV

“In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”—NIV

Colossians 2:9

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”—KJV

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”—NIV

The NIV suggests that Christ had only the form of a body. Many heretics would have happily accepted this, for they did not believe He was come in the flesh, but was merely a

"phantom." In all MSS, without exception, the reading here is "bodily."

I Timothy 3:16

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—KJV

"Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body/was vindicated by the Spirit/was seen by angels/was preached among the nations/was believed on in the world/was taken up in glory."—NIV

A footnote reads, "Some manuscripts God."

Before we leave this comparison of readings from the KJV and NIV (and such could be repeated many, many times over), we should give additional attention to the case of the last reference mentioned, I Timothy 3:16. The NIV claims "some manuscripts" read "God." Again, what are the facts of the case?

In this instance, it is impossible to obtain the testimony of even both the MSS underlying the Greek text of W-H, for the entire epistle of I Timothy is missing in B, Codex Vaticanus. So, based largely on one MS, Codex Sinaiticus, a MS covered with visible attempts by ten different scribes to correct its flagrant errors, the revisers of 1881 opted for "He Who" instead of "God." Practically every other translator since has followed obediently in their steps. But, supposing Paul actually said something like "He Who was manifest" or "which was manifest," what could he have meant?

Did he mean that the mystery of godliness was the fact that Christ was manifest in the flesh? If he did, why then did he not make his meaning plain by substituting the

word *Christ* for the word *He who*, making the quotation read, *Christ was manifest in the flesh, etc.*? Did he mean that Christ was the mystery of Godliness? Why then did he not place the word *Christ* in apposition to the word *who*, making the quotation read, *Christ, He who was manifest in the flesh, etc.*? But, according to the critics, Paul did neither of these two things. Instead he quoted an incomplete sentence, a subject without a predicate, and left it dangling. The makers of the R.S.V. adopt the Alexandrian reading (Codex Sinaiticus) and translate it, *He was manifested in the flesh, etc.*, and then place under it a note, Greek, *who*. But if the Greek is *who*, how can the English be *He*? This is not a translation but the creation of an entirely new reading.²⁶

Terence Brown says,

Dr. Bloomfield and other learned authorities have demonstrated that the new reading “the mystery...who was manifested” violates all the rules of construction and exhibits only too clearly the marks of accidental or deliberate corruption.²⁷

What difference does it make? Do we not know that, regardless of how the passage reads, it has reference to Christ? Why struggle so mightily over this one verse? Are there not many other verses which proclaim the deity of Jesus Christ, verses which are left relatively intact by the modern translations? For what reason do we contend so strongly for the reading “God” when so many other verses remain to which we can flee for testimony of the deity of Christ?

First, we are concerned about *every* Word of God. One Word,

even of one letter, would be enough to diligently defend. We are not willing to give a single concession to the naturalists, to the rationalists.

Second, we are concerned at this point because the altered reading does affect the meaning.

It is self evident that these statements do not affirm the same truth and that they cannot all be right. Paul himself was manifested in the flesh, but only Christ was God manifest in the flesh. Any man of Nazareth would be manifest in the flesh, but only Jesus of Nazareth was God manifest in the flesh.²⁴

Two types of ancient MSS exist: uncial (all capital letters) and cursive. In an uncial MS, if "God" were written in an abbreviated form (as it was in A, Codex Alexandrinus), the differences between the words "God" and "who" were simply two small strokes, one a horizontal line in the first letter, the other a small stroke written above the two letters. Certainly, a statement like, "Great is the mystery who was manifested" would be an odd reading, and if a transcriber were to find such a reading, he might be tempted to make it grammatically correct by further abbreviating it to read "Great is the mystery which was manifested."²⁵

At issue, then, are two small strokes. What is the evidence on each side?

The primary witness for "who" is Codex Sinaiticus. The great majority of Greek copies, however, have "God was manifested," while few have "who" or "which."²⁶

. . . At the time of the Revision nearly three hundred Greek copies were known to give indisputable support to the Received Text, while not more than a handful of Greek copies could be quoted in favour of "who" or "which."²⁷

Ancient testimony that the original reading was “God” includes:

The Syriac version of Philoxenus, A.D. 488-518
Cyril of Alexandria
Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394)
Diodorus of Tarsns (d. 370)
Chrysostom (d. 407)
Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 264)
Ignatius
Barnabas
Hippolytus³²

In his discussion of the divinity of Christ, Charles Hodge remarks:

For [God] we find the great body of the cursive Greek manuscripts and almost all the Greek Fathers. The authority of the Codex Alexandrinus is claimed on both sides. . . . For [who] C, F, G, of the uncial manuscripts,³³ only two of the cursive manuscripts, and the Coptic and Sahidic versions, are quoted. To this must be added the testimony of the very ancient manuscript³⁴ recently discovered by Tischendorf. . . . For which the uncial manuscript D, the Latin Vulgate and the Latin Fathers are the witnesses. . . . The internal evidence, so far as the perspicuity of the passage and the analogy of Scripture are concerned, are decidedly in favour of the common text.^{35 36}

Though the vast majority of cursives and nearly all the early fathers testify for “God,” “who” is accepted by virtually every version since the RV of 1881, largely on the basis of Codex Sinaiticus.

The Pulpit Commentary, while accepting "who" as the true reading, admits a problem:

...Who, is a relative, and must, therefore, have an antecedent. But there is no expressed antecedent of the masculine gender for it to agree with. The antecedent, therefore, must be understood. . . ."

While the author confesses that the "who" must refer to Christ, he has also revealed a fundamental flaw in this theory: The Holy Spirit, he suggests, inspired Paul to pen words which do not form a complete thought in themselves.

What of the testimony of A. Codex Alexandrinus? As Hodge pointed out, it is claimed on both sides of the issue.

Henry Alford, a nineteenth century scholar who adhered to the naturalistic view of W-H, claimed that what could have appeared to be a faint line through the first letter, transforming it from "who" to "God," was in reality simply the shadow of a letter appearing on the opposite side of the same page. Alford reported that a powerful microscope had been used to examine the passage, which had uncovered no trace of the horizontal line in the first letter, nor of the mark of contraction over the two letters. Thus, he said, "It is to be hoped. . .that A will never again be cited on the side of" the Received Text (Majority Text).

But, alas for Mr. Alford, scholars are still using Codex Alexandrinus in support of the reading "God." What is their basis?

Many distinguished scholars who have examined this copy during the last three hundred years have explained that these strokes were written in the original copy, that they had become indistinct with the passage of the centuries and had been written over at a later time to make

them clearer, and that the original strokes could still be discerned.

. . . Patrick Young had custody of this copy from A.D. 1628-1652 and he assured Archbishop Ussher that the original reading was “God”. In 1657 Huish collated the manuscript for Walton, who printed “God” in his massive Polyglot. Bishop Pearson wrote in 1659 “we find not ‘who’ in any copy”. Mill worked on his edition of the Greek from 1677 to 1707 and clearly states that he found “God” in the Codex Alexandrinus at this place. In 1718 Wotton wrote, “There can be no doubt that this manuscript always read ‘God’ in this place”. In 1716 Wetstein wrote, “Though the middle stroke has been retouched, the fine stroke originally in the letter is discernible at each end of the fuller stroke of the corrector.”

In his “Lectures on the true reading of I Timothy 3:16” (1737-1738) Berriman declared, “If at any time the old line should become all together indiscernible there will never be just cause to doubt but that the genuine and original reading of this manuscript was ‘God’ ”. Woide who edited this Codex in 1785 remarked that he had seen traces of the original stroke in 1765 which had ceased to be clearly visible twenty years later. One of the 1885 Revisers, Prebendary Scrivener, who examined the manuscript at least twenty times, asserted that in 1861 he could still discern the all important stroke which Berriman had seen more clearly in 1741.³⁸

So the same principle is repeated. The testimony of the *many* eye-witnesses is that the passage reads “God.” The testimony of the very *few* is that it reads “who.” Just as the KJV is based on the Majority Text, while the newer translations are founded on a

mere handful of MSS, so it is not just with I Timothy 3:16, but with a multitude of other Scriptures. And thus it will ever be. The few (B, Aleph, and a small group of later MSS and versions) insist that God's Holy and Pure Word was lost to mankind for 1,500 years and that when it was finally unearthed it agreed remarkably with the Romish Bible. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of extant MSS, the church fathers, the early versions, and the lectionaries testify to the Majority Text and reflect the text considered to be the pure Word of God by those from the earliest Christians on who resisted the advances of the Roman church.

Dr. George Sayles Bishop, shortly after the Revised Version was released, preached a message which, to this day, reflects the firm conviction of those who cling to the Majority Text as the Word of God:

The Revised Version weakens and removes the Deity of Christ in many places—one I mention in particular. I Timothy 3:16. . .The Revised Version leaves out *Theos*, God, and renders it "Great is the mystery of godliness. He who was manifest in the flesh"—i.e., the manifested One was only one phase—the highest—of godliness, the precise rendering for which all the unitarians have been contending for the last 1800 years. Codex "A" of the British Museum makes it, according to all testimony of 300 years, *Theos*. Dr. Scrivener, the foremost English critic, says it is *Theos*. He says his senses report it *Theos*. . .That conviction of Dr. Scrivener is my conviction and on the very same grounds—a conviction so deep that I will never yield it, nor admit as a test of my faith a Book pretending to be a Revelation from God which leaves that word out. The Holy Ghost has written it—let no man dare touch it—"Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh."

"Oh, but it is only one word!" Yes, but one word of Scripture of which it is said "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name!" "Only one word!" But that word "God." Better the whole living church of God should perish than that one word should perish.³⁹

Should the testimony of Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus) be accepted here over the preponderance of witnesses to the contrary? Consider: In the gospels alone, B and Aleph omit at least twenty-three words and phrases which emphasize the deity of the Lord Jesus. There seems to be a definite relationship between these MSS and the mutilated text of Origen, an Arian of the third century. To the believer who is convinced of the supernatural preservation of the Scriptures, the majority testimony, and the deity of Christ, there is but one choice: I Timothy 3:16 declares, "GOD was manifest in the flesh!"

We have examined but a few references. Are the differences, as Rice claims, "minor" and "insignificant"? When the Christian understands that there are really only two Bibles, though there are many translations, and that one is fuller and one is shorter, and when he considers the import of the Scriptural warning of the danger of adding or subtracting even one word, he will not rest until he has determined the truth. He cannot strike the hypocritical pose of using either or both texts. *One must be wrong, and it therefore must be avoided!*

We return, now, to Hills' discussion of the three basic alternative views to the manner in which God fulfilled His promise to preserve His Word to all generations.

(2) *The true reading preserved in at least one of the extant manuscripts.* Many conservative scholars seem to feel that God's providential care over the New Testament

text is adequately defined by the saying that the true reading has been preserved in at least one of the extant New Testament manuscripts.⁴⁰

Bruce is seen taking this view:

The wealth of attestation is such that the true reading is almost invariably bound to be preserved by at least one of the thousands of witnesses.⁴¹

Bruce seems to suggest, however, that there is a possibility, though remote, that the true reading might not be preserved in even one witness.

According to this view, at any moment a new MS could be unearthed that could theoretically show us that what we have had all along is not the Word of God, but corrupted texts. If God preserved His true Word in only one MS, and that fulfills His promise, who is to say that any of the thousands of MSS now in existence is the true one? Perhaps a dealer will come forth tomorrow with a MS still more ancient than any yet discovered, and it will force us to alter our teaching and faith!

Hills reveals the weaknesses of this concept:

If Christ has done no more than this, how can it be said that He has fulfilled His promise always to preserve in His Church the True New Testament Text? How can His people ever be certain that they have the True New Testament Text? For not all the extant New Testament manuscripts have yet been discovered. No doubt many of them still remain in the obscurity into which they were plunged centuries ago, concealed in holes, ruins, and other unknown places. How can we be sure that many true

readings are not hiding in these undiscovered manuscripts?⁴²

This theory, of course, contradicts the Scripture. Jesus commanded His disciples to “...teach all nations...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20). He quoted the Old Testament: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). He would never command His followers to do that which was impossible for them to do. Inherent in His command to teach the nations was the promise to preserve for His disciples of all ages those things he had “commanded” them to teach. If only one MS out of all the thousands extant at any given time were the Word of God, it would have been impossible for any but those who had access to it to obey Jesus’ command.

Hills presents the third alternative view to the divine preservation of the Scriptures:

(3) *Are naturalistic New Testament textual critics providentially guided?* Many conservatives have adopted the theory that it is through textual criticism, and especially through the textual criticism of Westcott and Hort, that Christ has fulfilled His promise always to preserve in His Church the True New Testament Text.⁴³

We have already discussed the theological views of W-H. That they would have been chosen as the ones to restore to the church the pure text of the New Testament seems unlikely indeed. This view is also fraught with the same errors as the previous views.

But this suggestion leads to conclusions which are extremely bizarre and inconsistent. It would have us believe

that during the manuscript period orthodox Christians corrupted the New Testament text, that the text used by the Protestant Reformers was the worst of all, and that the True Text was not restored until the 19th century, when Tregelles brought it forth out of the Pope's library, when Tischendorf rescued it from a waste basket on Mt. Sinai, and when Westcott and Hort were providentially guided to construct a theory of it which ignores God's special providence and treats the text of the New Testament like the text of any other ancient book. But if the True New Testament Text was lost for 1500 years, how can we be sure that it has ever been found again?"

Scripturally, any theory which has the pure Word of God "lost" or unavailable for a thousand and a half years is not tenable. If we had no other proof than this, we would know that the recently discovered codices which produced the minority text could not reflect the pure Word of God. However, additional proofs are numerous, as we shall see.

There is no debate in scholarly circles as to which of the two texts is in the majority. Even the enemies of the Received Text admit that 19/20 of all Greek MSS extant are in its class.

There are over 5,000 extant (known) Greek manuscripts . . . of the New Testament. They range in size from a scrap with parts of two verses to complete New Testaments. They range in date from the second century to the sixteenth. They come from all over the Mediterranean world. They contain several hundred thousand variant readings (differences in the text). The vast majority of these are misspellings or other obvious errors due to carelessness or ignorance on the part of the copyists. However, many

thousands of variants remain which need to be evaluated as we seek to reconstruct the precise original wording of the text. . . . In very broad and over-simplified terms, one camp generally follows the large majority of the MSS (between 80 and 90 percent) which are in essential agreement among themselves but which do not date from before the fifth century A.D., while the other generally follows a small handful (often less than ten) of earlier MSS (from the third, fourth and fifth centuries) which not only disagree with the majority, but also disagree among themselves. The second camp has been in general control of the scholarly world for the last 100 years. . .the fundamental difference between the New Testament in the American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, Today's English Version, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, etc., on the one hand, and in the King James Version on the other is that they are based on different forms of the Greek text. (There are over 5,000 differences between those two forms.)⁴⁵

What of these *five thousand* differences? Either the KJV, based upon the Majority Text, is wrong in some 5,000 instances, or the new translations, dating from the RV of 1881, are wrong. No Christian can be unconcerned as to which is right; the purity of God's Word is the issue!

Benjamin Wilkinson addresses the subject:

. . .Down through the eenturies there were only two streams of manuscripts.

The first stream which carried the Received Text in Hebrew and Greek, began with the apostolic church, and reappearing at intervals down the Christian Era among

enlightened believers, was protected by the wisdom and scholarship of the pure church in her different phases; precious manuscripts were preserved by such as the church at Pella in Palestine where Christians fled, when in 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem; by the Syrian Church of Antioch which produced eminent scholarship; by the Italic Church in northern Italy; and also at the same time by the Gallic Church in southern France and by the Celtic Church in Great Britain; by the pre-Waldensian, the Waldensian, and the churches of the Reformation.

This first stream appears, with very little change in the Protestant Bibles of many languages, and in English, in the Bible known as the King James Version.⁴⁴

The KJV was not, of course, the first English translation made from the Majority Text.

The King James Version was born of the Reformation; the Revised Versions and some modern Bibles were born of Higher Criticism and Romanizing activities. . . .⁴⁵ The KJV was the crowning fruit of a series of translations made in the Reformation period—Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthews, Geneva, and Bishops' Bible.⁴⁶

The First Stream

The command of Jesus to His disciples to preach and teach in all nations and to every creature indicated that the Word of God would have to be translated into languages other than that in which it was written (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15). This also gave advance notice that the Holy Bible could be translated into other languages and still remain the Word of God.

As the early Christians began to spread out over the earth to preach the gospel, it became necessary to translate the Word of God into the language of the people. The first such translation was into Syriac. Other languages into which the Bible was translated included Latin, Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Armenian. Many translations date to within fifty years of the death of the last apostle. About A.D. 350, the Bible was for the first time translated into the Germanic, or Gothic, language, the forerunner of the English language. Shortly after this, Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, and his translation became known as the Latin Vulgate, which, until recently, was the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

In A.D. 312, Constantine I became emperor of Rome. Constantine established his headquarters at Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople. Then the Roman Empire split east and west, with the eastern section becoming known as the Byzantine Empire, and the western as the Latin, or Roman Empire. The Latin translation of Jerome was the Bible of the Roman Empire, while the eastern church preserved the Bible in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek. Until the Byzantine Empire fell to the Turks in 1454, no translation since Jerome's had been made from the original languages.

John Wycliffe realized that the Holy Bible should be translated into the language of the people. The Roman Catholic Bible was in the Latin language, thus making it a sealed book to the average person. Only the Roman priests could read it. In 1378, Wycliffe translated the Bible from Latin into English. For this, he was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. Wycliffe was so hated by the Roman hierarchy for making the Bible available in the language of the people, that forty years after his death his bones were dug up, burned, and scattered in a river which flowed near a church he once pastored.

Though John Wycliffe's translation was not from the original languages, it was treasured by the people. Some would even trade

a load of hay for the privilege of spending a certain amount of time with a handwritten copy for one day. A bill was brought into the parliament to forbid the circulation of the Scriptures in English. Those who had a copy of Wycliffe's translation were hunted down and were often burned at the stake with a copy of the English Scriptures hung about their neck. Husbands were made to witness against wives who had a portion of Wycliffe's Bible. Children were forced to light the fire to burn their parents who possessed the English Bible. It was another one hundred years before a second attempt was made to translate the Bible into English.

As God's providence would have it, the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the invention of the printing press closely coincided. Devout Christians from the eastern, or Byzantine, empire fled before the fall of Constantinople back into the western empire, Russia, and specifically Italy. They took with them their precious Bible MSS in the original Hebrew and Greek languages. Wycliffe had not had a Hebrew or Greek MS from which to translate, but these did.

With the return of the Hebrew and Greek MSS to the West, there came a revival of the study of Hebrew and Greek. The first Greek grammar was published in 1476 and the first Hebrew grammar in 1503. Erasmus, a great Greek scholar, gathered the best of the old Greek MSS and published the first edition of his Greek New Testament in 1516. This text, with some revisions, is what we know today as the *Textus Receptus* (the text reflected by the Majority Text, Byzantine Text, or Traditional Text, etc.). It has been said that Erasmus laid the egg of the Reformation, and Martin Luther hatched it.

It was at this time, in conjunction with the invention of the printing press, the revival of learning, and the publication of Erasmus' Greek New Testament, that William Tyndale appeared. In 1483, the year after the birth of Martin Luther, and exactly one

hundred years after the death of John Wycliffe, Tyndale was born. He graduated from Oxford University and Cambridge University. It was about the time that Tyndale went to Cambridge that the Greek New Testament became popular. One day, someone in his class said, “We had better be without God’s laws than the pope’s.” Tyndale, rising from his seat, said, “I defy the pope and all his laws. And if God spare me, I will one day make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the scriptures than the pope does.”

Since the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England were closely allied in those days, Tyndale was not supported in his efforts to translate the New Testament from the original Greek into English. Finally, working in exile, he produced the first complete printed New Testament in English, translated from the original Greek sources. Martin Luther had also translated the Bible into German, using the same text as Tyndale, the *Textus Receptus*. In 1536, Tyndale was strangled at the stake, then burned. His last words were a prayer: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” Tyndale prayed that the King of England would see the need of having the Bible in the English language.

In 1539, the high church leaders of the Church of England decided it was indeed time to have a Bible in the language of the people and approved and authorized the Great Bible, so called because of its size. Before Tyndale’s death, in 1535, Miles Coverdale printed the Coverdale Bible. Coverdale was not the scholar that Tyndale was (Tyndale knew seven languages, including Hebrew and Greek), and his Bible made no pretense at being an original translation. It was translated out of the German and Latin into English. In 1537 Matthew’s Bible appeared. Matthew was a pseudonym for an early reformer who was martyred during the reign of Queen Mary, the Roman Catholic daughter of Henry VIII. But all of these Bibles after Tyndale were really simply revisions

of Tyndale's work. Though he was martyred, his work lived on.

In 1603, Elizabeth died. But she had harbored the Protestants and helped prepare the way for the greatest translation of all time, the King James Version.

The Second Stream

The second, small stream of MSS is described by Wilkinson: These last manuscripts are represented:

- (a) In Greek:—The Vatican MS., or Codex B, in the library at Rome; and the Sinaitic, or Codex Aleph, its brother. . . .
- (b) In Latin:—The Vulgate or Latin Bible of Jerome.
- (c) In English:—The Jesuit Bible of 1582, which later with vast changes is seen in the Douay, or Catholic Bible.
- (d) In English again:—In many modern Bibles which introduce practically all the Catholic readings of the Latin Vulgate which were rejected by the Protestants of the Reformation; among these, prominently, are the Revised Versions.*

Notice carefully, as far as the Greek MSS are concerned, the minority text rests primarily on only two, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus. These codices, of relatively late discovery, form the basis for the Greek text used by virtually every translation from the RV of 1881 on. It is this text that differs in some 5,000 places from that of the Majority Text. What do we know about these MSS?

The Age of the Vatican and Sinai Codices

The *one* factor spoken in favor of these MSS is their alleged antiquity. It is said that since they are older than any extant Greek MS supporting the Majority Text, they must be better. It is *assumed* that age automatically denotes superiority. But when it comes to determining the true text of the Word of God, *no assumptions should be made!*

Indeed, rather than testifying on their behalf, the age of these MSS (generally, they are thought to have originated about A.D. 331) witnesses strongly *against* them.

Burton Burdon regarded the exceptional age of *B* and *Aleph* as a proof not of their goodness but of their badness. If they had been good manuscripts, they would have been read to pieces long ago. "We suspect that these two manuscripts are indebted for their preservation, *solely to their ascertained evil character*; which has occasioned that the one eventually found its way, four centuries ago, to a forgotten shelf in the Vatican Library; while the other, after exercising the ingenuity of several generations of critical Correctors, eventually (viz. in A.D. 1844) got deposited in the wastepaper basket of the Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai. Had *B* and *Aleph* been copies of average purity, they must long since have shared the inevitable fate of books which are freely *used* and highly prized; namely, they would have fallen into decadence and disappeared from sight.⁵⁰

Just as a Christian today may very well wear out several Bibles during his lifetime, through regular reading and study, so, from the beginning of the Christian era, the pure MSS were read

constantly and copied often. This regular use would only serve to gradually wear out the MS. If the N.T. Christians followed the example of the Jewish rabbis (and no doubt they did, for the Jewish manner of preserving the Scriptures had proven to be the most accurate way), they would not allow the copies of the Autographs to be read to pieces. Rather, when a copy became too old and worn for ordinary use, they would have disposed of it. The Jewish rabbis so venerated their copies of the Old Testament that when they were worn beyond normal use, they would store them in their synagogues for burial at a later time. Lake, Blake, and New agree that this was the case even with the New Testament MSS:

...It is hard to resist the conclusion that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they had copied the sacred books.²¹

It is unthinkable that a pure MS would have existed for some 1,500 years without becoming extremely worn. It is not as if the existence of B and Aleph was unknown prior to their discoveries by Tregelles and Tischendorf. Someone knew of them, in order to place them in the Vatican Library and St. Catherine's monastery. Are we to suppose that the individuals who deposited these MSS in their respective places were totally ignorant of their contents? Are we to think that, for hundreds of years, the librarians at the Vatican would, in turn, overlook the value of that MS reposing in their care, and that the monks at Sinai would be equally ignorant? It makes far more sense to acknowledge that these MSS had a reputation for inaccuracy, a reputation which allowed them, year after year, to remain relatively untouched by the hands of those interested in copying and preserving the pure Word of God.

The argument for superiority of antiquity is a deceptive one, for it implies that there is no evidence for the authenticity of the

Majority Text as ancient as that for the text which underlies the RV and subsequent versions. This is not true. For in addition to the testimony of the Greek MSS, we must also consider the value of the ancient translations and the quotes from Scripture by the early church fathers, as well as the evidence of the lectionaries (copies of portions of Scripture to be read in public worship, much like Scripture portions are today reprinted in Sunday school literature, etc.). While the most ancient Greek MS extant which supports the Majority Text goes back to the fifth century, and the MSS (B and Aleph) supporting the shorter text of the revisions goes back to the fourth century, the overwhelming testimony of the early translations, quotes, and lectionaries supports the Majority Text. Burdon says,

I have cited upon the last twelve verses of Mark no less than twelve authorities before the end of the third century, that is down to a date which is nearly half a century before Codex B and Aleph appeared. The general mass of quotations found in the books of the early fathers witnesses to what I say. So that there is absolutely no reason to place these two manuscripts upon a pedestal by themselves on the score of supreme antiquity. They are eclipsed in this respect by many other authorities older than they are.⁵²

Philip Mauro puts the question succinctly:

Should the purely negative testimony of those two Codices (i.e. the fact that certain words and passages are not found in them) be allowed to overthrow the affirmative testimony of hundreds of other Greek Manuscripts, Versions, and quotations from the church Fathers?⁵³

To accept the negative testimony of the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus in omitting thousands of words, phrases, verses, and entire passages found in the Majority Text is to place these two MSS not only in opposition to the thousands of extant Greek MSS from the fifth century on, but also against the versions, church fathers, and lectionaries which predate them!

Mauro, by use of a parable, reveals the foolishness of this line of reasoning:

...let us suppose that a hundred copies of a certain original document in a central business office were made by different copyists and sent to as many different branch-offices in various parts of the world; and suppose that, since the document contained directions for the carrying on of the business for many generations, it had to be copied again and again as the individual MSS. were worn out through usage.

Suppose further that, after centuries of time, one of the earliest copies should turn up which, upon examination, was found to lack a word or sentence found in later copies in actual service, and that it were deemed important to settle the question of the authenticity of that word or sentence.

Suppose further that, for the purpose in view, a dozen of the manuscripts then in actual use in various and far distant parts of the world, each one being a late copy of previously used and worn-out copies, were examined, and that the disputed word or sentence were found in each of those late copies, is it not clear that the authenticity thereof would be established beyond all reasonable dispute?

Such must be the conclusion, because the absence thereof in the ancient copy could easily be accounted for,

whereas its presence in a number of later copies, each of which came from a distant source, could not be accounted for except on the assumption of its genuineness.

But let us suppose that, in addition to the various copies in use in various places, there existed certain translations (versions in foreign languages) which translations were earlier than the very earliest of the existing manuscripts in the original tongue; and also that many quotations of the disputed passage were found in the writings of persons who lived in or near the days when the document itself was written; and suppose that the disputed word or sentence were found in every translation and every quotation, would not its genuineness be established beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt?

This suppositious case will give a good idea of the strength of the evidence in favor of the Text of the A.V. For in the settling of that text, due weight was given to the concurrent testimony of the numerous MSS. *in actual use in different churches, widely separated from one another;* and also to the corroborating testimony of the most ancient Versions and of the patristic writings; whereas, in the settling of the text for the R.V. the evidence of highest grade was uniformly rejected in favor of that of the lowest grade.⁵⁴

Clearly, the age of a MS alone is not sufficient to establish its ultimate authority. If it was the Autograph, the original writing, it would, but no original writing survives. The B and Aleph MSS, apparently ancient, are yet from the fourth century, and predate the MSS extant in the Majority tradition by only a relatively few years, the earliest of the latter being from the fifth century. It would seem that the testimony of the vast majority of MSS from the fifth

century on, plus the witness of the versions, lectionaries, and church fathers from the second century, would be sufficient to dispel forever the overbalanced credence given to the two lone MSS sandwiched between. For these two codices to be given such weight as to challenge the Traditional Text, much more evidence would be required than that offered by them alone. Actually, they cannot be taken as two witnesses, for there is ample evidence that they are both the offspring of the same corrupted copy.

*Physical Characteristics of
Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus*

What are the physical characteristics of these two MSS which, to a large degree, form the basis of every version since the RV of 1881? What kind of MSS influenced the revisers to make some 36,000 changes in the English and nearly 6,000 in the Greek text? Dr. Ellicott, one of the revisers, stated that they had made between eight and nine changes in every five verses, and in about every ten verses three of these were made for critical purposes.⁴⁴

It should be noted first that these two codices do not agree between themselves. They differ

. . . Not only from ninety-nine out of a hundred of the whole body of extant MSS. besides, but even from one another. This last circumstance, obviously fatal to their corporate pretensions, is unaccountably overlooked. As said of the two false witnesses that came to testify against Christ, so it may be said of these witnesses who are brought forward at this late day to testify against the Received Text, "But neither so did their witness agree together."⁴⁵

Aleph is covered with attempts at correction by the hands of at least ten different scribes. The handwriting of the various individuals who attempted to correct the many errors of the MS suggests the approximate dates of such efforts. While the codex itself is usually dated from the fourth century, and many of the corrections were attempted evidently at that time, most of the efforts are dated during the sixth and seventh centuries. The MS itself is the work of three different scribes besides the correctors.

So far from the book being written throughout by one person, it is indisputably the work of three . . . , and its pages swarm with corrections in various scripts ranging in date from the fourth century to the twelfth. . . .

In its pristine state the manuscript probably comprised at least 730 leaves; but to-day only 390 leaves remain, 242 in the Old Testament and 148 in the New. . . .

Nothing now remains of the earlier books of the Old Testament except for a few scraps from Genesis and Numbers. The Sinaiticus contains a single leaf of I Chronicles (ix. 27-xi. 22), but most of the extant portion of that hook (xi. 22-xix. 17) is in Leipzig. The books 2 Chronicles and I Esdras are wanting, but 2 Esdras ix. 9-end is at Leipzig, with Esther complete, and Tobit i. 1-ii. 2. The rest of Tohit, Judith (except for one leaf), 1 and 4 Maccabees, Isaiah, and Jeremiah i. 1-x. 25 are in the Codex Sinaiticus. Jeremiah x. 25-end and Lamentations i. 1-ii. 20 complete the Codex Friderico-Augustanus. There follows a gap in the manuscript resulting in the total loss of Ezekiel, Daniel, and the first three Minor Prophets. . . . The New Testament in the Sinaiticus is complete, and is followed by two non-canonical writings, the Epistle of Barnabas and the 'Shepherd' of Hermas.⁵⁷

Now that we have considered the actual contents of the MS, what is the condition of the contents? Milne and Skeat of the British Museum continue:

Scribe A... would be put down as a poor speller but for the existence of scribe B, whose illiteracy is so startling that it is indeed a puzzle to understand how he can ever have been chosen to work on a manuscript of this class....

...Scribe D's contributions are curiously spasmodic... In the New Testament he rewrote six pages where, apparently, scribe A had made some unusually serious mistakes. He also made a beginning with Revelations, but relinquished his task in favour of A after writing only the first five verses....

...the manuscript was written from dictation....

One amusing example of a mistake caused by dictation is in I Maccabees v. 20, where the manuscripts should read *eight thousand*, written as a numeral thus: 'ח. In its place we find an apparently meaningless jumble of symbols: חגחט. The second and fourth of these can only be the numerals 6 and 3,000, while the first and third either stand for the figure '8' or, taken together, the words 'either...or'. The latter alternative gives the clue to the puzzle: the reader was unable to decipher the numeral in the book before him, and called out 'either six or three thousand', which the thoughtless scribe wrote down word for word!

The number and variety of corrections which have been made from time to time in the Codex Sinaiticus place it in a class by itself. Tischendorf's great edition enumerates 14,800 places where some alteration has been made to the

text. . . .

. . . Unfortunately the work was not systematically carried out, and large stretches of the manuscript were left untouched, or only sporadically corrected.

In the Gospels, where the corrections are very numerous and often of textual importance. . . .the position is unusually complicated. The reader who dictated the Gospels must have been singularly careless, for again and again whole sentences have dropped out where his wandering eye had failed to keep the place. A good many of these were inserted in the margins of the manuscript by scribe A when going over his work in the usual desultory manner. But the corrections from his pen show such variations of script that they probably represent several different attempts at revision, while interspersed among them are supplementary corrections by scribe D, who perhaps had the last word in cases of special difficulty. Nor are these corrections confined, as elsewhere in the manuscript, to rectifying scribal errors; for many of them make actual changes in the wording, introducing variants known to us from other sources. There is indeed some reason to think that these variants were noted in the exemplar from which the Sinaiticus was copied—a species of master copy, amounting almost to a critical edition. But on what principles one variant was preferred to another, and to whom the decision ultimately belonged, it is not easy to discover.

. . . There actually are some curious errors in the Codex Sinaiticus which would be readily explicable if the manuscript had been written at Caesarea. . . .

. . . In the Old Testament the character of the Sinaitus is somewhat uneven. . . .⁵⁸

Further insight as to the physical characteristics of Aleph, and the nature of the errors, is available:

. . . There are internal evidences that lead to the conclusion that it was the work of a scribe who was singularly careless, or incompetent, or both. In this Ms. the arrangement of the lines is peculiar, there being four columns on each page, each line containing about twelve letters—all capitals run together. There is no attempt to end a word at the end of a line, for even words having only two letters as en, ek, are split in the middle, the last letter being carried over to the beginning of the next line, though there was ample room for it on the line preceding. . . Dr. Scrivener says: "This manuscript must have been derived from one in which the lines were similarly divided, since the writer occasionally omits just the number of letters which would suffice to fill a line, and that to the utter ruin of the sense; as if his eye had heedlessly wandered to the line immediately below. . . complete lines are omitted. . . the copyist passed in the middle of a line to the corresponding portion of the line below."

This, of course, would testify against the assumption of the British Museum that Aleph was the product of dictation. If it was not dictated, it must have been copied from an extremely corrupt copy, for a mistake such as that found in I Maccabees 5:20 to occur. If it was not copied by dictation, it is possible that the scribe did not even know the Greek language, for how else can we explain his ignorance in dividing two syllable words?

Even Dr. Tregelles, a sympathizer with the revision, admitted of Aleph that "the state of the text, as proceeding from the first scribe, may be regarded as very rough."⁶⁶

Burgon, one of the great defenders of the Byzantine Text, also addressed the issue of the corruptions in the Sinai MS:

The impurity of the text exhibited by these codices is not a question of opinion but of fact. . . Codex Sinaiticus abounds with “errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance.” On many occasions, 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. “Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled: while that gross blunder. . . whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament.⁶¹

Codex B (Vaticanus), *in the gospels alone*, “leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times. It bears traces of careless transcription on every page.”⁶²

As Burgon says, “It is easier to find two consecutive verses in which the two MSS. differ, the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree”.⁶³ It is no wonder, then, that he is so bold as to proclaim

. . . Without a particle of hesitation, . . . they are three⁶⁴ of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant. . . [they] exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with. . . [they] have become known (by whatever process, for their history is wholly unknown) the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversion of truth, which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.⁶⁵

And these are, by and large, the two sole MSS upon which the versions since 1881 are based! This is the "authority" by which the thousands of departures from the Majority Text are justified! What a strange turn of events that the combined testimony of thousands of extant MSS, the testimony of the church fathers, the early translations, and the lectionaries would be set aside in favor of two obviously corrupt MSS! It will surely not be too presumptuous to suggest that something besides their mistaken notion of superiority of antiquity must have motivated W-H and company in their insistence on following these codices.

The choice is clear. There are, today, only two basic texts from which translation is done. One is the Majority Text, upon which the KJV is based; the other is the critical text developed by W-H, upon which virtually every other translation from 1881 until this date is based. The former is represented by thousands of extant MSS, early (second century) translations, lectionaries, and church fathers; the latter is seen in a tiny band of MSS, represented most frequently by B and Aleph, which violently disagree among themselves. These texts differ in thousands of places; *they cannot both be the Word of God!*

A choice must be made between the two. The only third alternative is that we still do not have God's pure Word. That is unthinkable, for He promised to keep and preserve it for all generations. God's integrity is at stake.

The Search for the Word of God

¹David Otis Fuller, ed., *True or False?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1973), p. 124.

²Greenlee, *Introduction*, p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 81.

⁴Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, p. 189.

⁵Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, pp. 9, 10.

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 11.

⁹Hills, *Defended*, p. 108.

¹⁰Greenlee, *Introduction*, p. 81.

¹¹Ibid., p. 72.

¹²John R. Rice, *Our God-Breathed Book—The Bible* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1969), p. 355.

¹³John W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S. Mark* (Ann Arbor, MI: Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1959), p. 165.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 151, 153.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 153, 154.

¹⁶Hills, *Defended*, p. 160.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 161.

²⁰Burgon, *Twelve Verses*, p. 168.

²¹Fuller, *Counterfeit*, pp. 44-46.

²²Ibid., pp. 46-48.

²³Burgon, *Twelve Verses*, pp. 275, 285, 287, 289.

²⁴Ibid., 195.

²⁵Fuller, *Counterfeit*, pp. 157-58.

²⁶Hills, *Defended*, p. 138.

Two Bibles From Which to Choose

"Fuller, *True or False?*, pp. 38, 39.

"*Ibid.*, p. 31.

"*Ibid.*

"*Ibid.*, p. 33.

"*Ibid.*

"*Ibid.*, pp. 34-37.

"*No later than Aleph.*

"*Codex Sinaiticus*, or Aleph.

"The Majority Text, which reads "God."

"Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1965), pp. 518-19.

"H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell, eds., *The Pulpit Commentary* 21 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1977), p. 55.

"Fuller, *True or False?*, pp. 32-33.

"Fuller, *Which Bible?*, pp. 110-11.

"Hills, *Defended*, p. 109.

"Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, p. 180.

"Hills, *Defended*, p. 109.

"*Ibid.*, p. 109.

"*Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

"Pichering, *Identity*, p. 16.

"Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 187.

"*Ibid.*, p. 180.

"*Ibid.*, n. 6.

"*Ibid.*, p. 188.

"Hills in Bergen, *Twelve Verses*, p. 23.

"Pichering, *Identity*, p. 52.

"Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 126.

The Search for the Word of God

⁵³Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 85.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 86-87.

⁵⁵Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 298.

⁵⁶Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 78.

⁵⁷*The Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Alexandrinus* (Oxford: University Press, 1938), pp. 9, 11, 12.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 15, 16, 17, 20, 22.

⁵⁹Fuller, *True or False?*, pp. 76-77.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 77.

⁶¹Burton, *Twelve Verses*, pp. 153-54.

⁶²Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 77.

⁶³Burton, *Twelve Verses*, p. 156.

⁶⁴He includes Bezae.

⁶⁵Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 78.

What Kind Of A Book Is The Bible?

C. S. Lewis, in his defense of the deity of Jesus Christ, once wrote,

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. . . . You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.¹

The Search for the Word of God

Lewis' reasoning hinges on the profession Jesus made as to His own identity. Since He clearly claimed to be the Messiah, and identified Himself as one with the Father, there can be no middle ground in assessing His identity. (See John 4:26; 14:8-11.) Either He was Who He claimed to be, or He wasn't. If He wasn't, only two options are available: He was mistaken, or He was intentionally deceptive. Of course, we accept at full value His testimony, and proclaim Jesus Christ to be Lord and God.

How does this apply to the Holy Bible? In exactly the same manner. The Scriptures make specific, plain claims as to their origin, nature, and reliability. Because of what they profess to be, the Word of God Himself, we are left with only two choices. They are either the Word of God, or they aren't. If they are not, only two possibilities remain: They were written by men who, though sincere, were deluded, or they were written by men who were knowingly attempting to deceive the public as to the nature of their work. We accept the first option: The Scriptures are the infallible, everlasting, powerful, living Word of God.

The Testimony of Jesus

By faith, we accept the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6). Therefore, we accept His Words as the Word of God. What did He say about the authorship, authority, reliability, and nature of the Scriptures?

Jesus asked the unbelieving Sadducees, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (Mark 12:26).

The Jews, recognizing that Jesus made Himself "equal with God," sought to kill Him. His answer to them included these words:

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. . . . Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:39, 45-47).

In these two brief passages, Jesus established the following facts:

1. There was a real man named Moses.
2. This man Moses wrote a book.
3. Moses wrote of Jesus Christ.
4. God spoke to Moses from the burning bush.
5. All of the Scriptures known at the time of Jesus (identical to our Old Testament today, except for arrangements and divisions of books) testify of Him.

These claims fly directly in the face of the "higher" criticism, which insists that there was never a literal man by the name of Moses, and that even if there had been such a man, the art of writing was not developed that early in civilization. Thus, the JEDP theory of multiple authors for the Pentateuch has been devised to explain the origin of the work. Such views were countenanced by some of the revisers of 1881. One of them, Dean Stanley, expressed his sympathy for Bishop Colenso of Natal:

I might mention one who. . .has ventured to say that the Pentateuch is not the work of Moses; . . .who has ventured to say that the narratives of those historical incidents are colored not unfrequently by the necessary infirmities which belong to the human instruments by which they are conveyed—and that individual is the one who now addresses you. If you pronounce against the Bishop of Natal

on grounds such as these, you must remember that there is one close at hand whom...you will be obliged to condemn.²

A clear choice is here presented: the Words of Jesus, or those of naturalistic, fallible adherents to higher criticism.

In Luke 20:41-44, Jesus addressed the subject of the authorship of the Psalms:

“And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?”

Here, Christ attributed the Psalms to David, indicating, again, that there was a real man by that name, a King of Israel, who wrote the Psalms.

Jesus extended His endorsement of the Scriptures to another book in Matthew 24:15:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”

Thus, according to Christ, there was a man by the name of Daniel, and he wrote the book which is called by his name.

What was Jesus’ view of the inspiration of Scripture? The answer to that question is seen in Mark 12:36:

“For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Jesus plainly says that David spoke "by the Holy Ghost." He did not "speak his own mind," nor did he "write about God." Rather, he spoke by the inspiration and command of the Holy Spirit.

What of the reliability of Scripture? Jesus said, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;" (John 10:35). The Greek word translated "broken," *luo*, carries the literal or figurative meaning of to loosen. Jesus asserted, then, that the Scriptures are a unit; they stand as one; they cannot be divided.

Just how steadfast a unit the Scripture is, is seen even more forcibly in Matthew 5:18:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass,
one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law,
till all be fulfilled."

In other words, the unity and endurance of the Word of God is even more sure than that of the universe. It is more likely that the sky will fall and the earth disintegrate, than that the smallest "jot" or "tittle" will be lost from the law (a broad term describing the whole of the existing Scripture at that time; compare with verse 17, where Jesus speaks of both the law and the prophets).

Jesus clearly accredited the entirety of the Scriptures included in the Hebrew MSS, of which our Old Testament today is comprised:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

Jesus mentioned specifically the three major sections of Scripture:

1. The law of Moses
2. The prophets
3. The psalms

On this passage (Luke 24:44), Albert Barnes comments:

In the law of Moses. The five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Among the Jews, this was the first division of the Old Testament, and was called the *law*. *The prophets.* This was the second and largest part of the Hebrew Scriptures. It comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, which were called the *former prophets*; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve smaller books from Daniel to Malachi, which were called the *latter prophets*. *The psalms.* This word here probably means what were comprehended under the name of *Hagiographa*, or holy writings. It comprehended the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. This division of the Old Testament was in use long before the time of Christ, and was what he referred to here.³

Jesus assigned infallibility to all of these Old Testament books when He said, “. . .*all things MUST be fulfilled.* . . .” These were

not the writings of mere men, but of men inspired and moved by the Holy Ghost; they were indeed breathed by a God Who knew every detail of the future. (See II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21.)

As we have already seen, Jesus accredited the New Testament writings in advance, assigning inspiration and infallibility to them, as well. (See John 16:12; 14:26.)

The testimony of Jesus is that both the Old Testament and the New Testament were divinely inspired, that they were actually the words of God, and that their preservation was more sure than that of the universe itself.

The Testimony of the Old Testament

In a previous chapter, we noted the thousands of times that the Old Testament proclaims, "Thus saith the Lord," "And God said," and "The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying," and other similar phrases. Without doubt, the Old Testament claims to be the very Word of God. These words were not to be added to or taken away from. (See Deuteronomy 4:2 and Proverbs 30:5, 6.) They would be supernaturally preserved to all generations (Psalm 12:6, 7).

The ultimate honor accorded His Word by God Himself was revealed to David: "For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psalm 138:2). Great emphasis is placed on the Name of God in the Old Testament, but the Word has an even higher position. Also to David, God revealed the permanence of His Word: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). This verse seems to also speak of the preexistence of the Word as a unit in the mind of God from eternity. There is no changeability to the Word of God; once He has spoken, the Word remains the same. While the seasons come and go, His Word stands unmoved: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God

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shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8). Hills comments:

Although the Scriptures were written during a definite historical period, they are not the product of that period but of the eternal plan of God. When God designed the holy Scriptures in eternity, He had the whole sweep of human history in view. Hence the Scriptures are forever relevant. Their message can never be outgrown.⁴

The Old Testament, then, claimed to be the inspired, infallible, permanent Word of God. But what of the New Testament?

The Testimony of the New Testament

The New Testament accords the highest possible view to the origin of the Scriptures:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

The Greek word from which "inspiration" is translated literally means *God-breathed*. W-H's view of the inspiration of Scripture, and that of the majority among the revisers of 1881, is seen in the strange twist they gave to II Timothy 3:16:

Of all the changes introduced into the Text of the R.V., that which has raised the greatest storm of protest is the alteration of the words, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," so as to make the passage read, "Every Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable." This apparently slight change gives a very different

turn to the sense of the verse, for it suggests that there are "Scriptures" which are not given by inspiration of God. . .it has been often pointed out by competent scholars that there is no warrant whatever for this alteration. . .²

That the will of man had nothing to do with the writing of Scripture is seen in II Peter 1:20, 21:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

This verse is often misquoted and misprinted to read "moved on," an error which leads to a lower view of inspiration. The holy men of God were not moved on; however, they were moved—two entirely different things. The word "moved" is translated from the Greek *phero*, on which Vine comments:

PHERO. . . , to bear, carry, is rendered "being moved" in 2 Peter 1:21, signifying that they were 'borne alone,' or impelled, by the Holy Spirit's power, not acting according to their own wills, or simply expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him.³

Fuller remarks:

Without impairing or destroying their individual personalities and style, the Spirit of God "carried along" those inspired writers of His words, so that they did in fact record the very words of God—"Not in words which man's wisdom

teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches.” Those who reject this as impossible would reduce the Almighty to the stature of a fallible man, but “with God all things are possible.”⁷⁷

Like the words of Jesus, these New Testament passages accredit the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures, known to us today as the Old Testament. Thus, all of the Old Testament was given by “inspiration of God” (God-breathed); the holy men did not speak of their own will, but were moved along—as is a sailboat by the wind—by the Spirit of God. In a supernatural fashion, God breathed His words and these holy men were moved to write them. The Hebrew Scriptures are not the words of men about God, but the Word of God to men.

In Stephen’s defense of his orthodoxy before his false accusers, he attested to the living nature of God’s Word.

“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Siua, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us” (Acts 7:38).

The word “lively” literally means *living*. God’s Words (in this case the Old Testament specifically) are *alive*. They are not just so much ink traced onto skins. The fact that they are living and not dead further speaks of their endurance, and the impossibility of them being mutilated and lost to humanity. The living nature of the Word of God is also seen in Hebrews 4:12, 13.

Previously, we saw that the New Testament bears its own internal witness to the inspiration of the books within its scope. Paul claimed to write the commandments of the Lord (I Corinthians 14:37). So did John (Revelation 22:18, 19). Peter identified Paul’s

writings as Scripture (II Peter 3:15, 16). Peter also claimed equal authority for himself and all the apostles with the holy prophets of old (II Peter 3:2). Paul accredited the gospels as Scripture (I Timothy 5:18).

Both Testaments Warn of Corruptions

While the writers of both testaments asserted the divine nature of the words they wrote, they also warned of attempted corruption.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:30, 31).

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. . . . Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:21, 31, 32).

Note well the subtlety of these false prophets: They did not say, "Thus saith Baal" or "Molech" or any other false god. Rather, they said, "Thus saith the LORD." They implied they were speaking God's Word when they were not.

Paul warned of a similar danger in the New Testament.

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of

God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17).

In II Corinthians 11:3, 4, Paul compared the corruption of the pure gospel to the manner in which the serpent deceived Eve:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

Since Paul compares the corruption of the New Testament Christians with the deception of Eve, it is instructive to examine the nature of Satan's approach to her.

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? . . . And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:1, 4).

First, Satan questioned the Word of God: "Hath God said?" Secondly, he denied God's Word. He uses precisely the same approach through the means of the textual criticism of the day: "Is this really the Word of God. . . did God actually say this?" Then, when sufficient doubt has been planted, he takes his deception a step further, and denies major portions of God's Word altogether.

Obviously, the Holy Bible cannot be refused as the Word of God while touted as "great literature." It does not claim to be great

literature, or a collection of good moral teachings, or the words of men about God. It does not pretend to contain truth; it insists it is truth. The Scriptures are either what they claim to be—the inspired, infallible, inerrant, eternal Word of God—or they are worse than the words of mere humans; they are lies. This is stressed to show that there is no neutral territory, no middle ground, when it comes to the nature of the Holy Bible.

But do not the various translations simply "say the same thing in a different way?"

Rationalism and Mysticism

Only two concepts have gained enough support within Christianity to challenge Biblical inspiration: rationalism and mysticism.

Rationalism, introduced into Christianity through Socinianism in the sixteenth century, was an attempt to distinguish between inspired and uninspired elements within the Scriptures. During the eighteenth century, rationalists could be found among the *Sycretists* in Germany and the Roman Catholic Jesuits. During the nineteenth century, rationalism assumed three positions: first, only the mysteries (those things undiscovered by unaided reason) of the faith were inspired; second, the Bible is inspired only in matters of faith and practice; third, the Bible is inspired in the thoughts or concepts and not inspired in its words.¹

The specific element under consideration here is the third point: the Bible is inspired in the thoughts or concepts and not inspired in its words.

This rationalistic view underlies the current rash of versions

and paraphrases. It is thought by many that it matters little which translation one uses; they all say the same thing, just in different words.

Laying aside, for the moment, all considerations of the text, compare this viewpoint with that of Scripture. The Bible nowhere suggests that God spoke in ideas, thoughts, or concepts. Rather, it insists that He spoke in *words*. If the words attributed to Him are not the words He spoke (or direct translations of those words), they are not God's words, they are paraphrases. In their most depraved form, such paraphrases are the words of fallible men, recording what they think God was "trying" to say. Of course, God has never *tried* to say anything; He has simply spoken.

Only the specific words God spoke (or their direct translation) are the words of God; all else are the words of men. There is a great difference between *translating* God's words and *interpreting* them. Thus, it certainly does matter what is purported to be the Word of God. If one translation has God saying a thing and another quotes Him differently, both cannot be right. They may both be wrong, but they cannot both be right. God did not say two things. It is of crucial importance that we establish the Hebrew and Greek texts which are truly God's words and that they be accurately translated.

Mysticism has also resurfaced, even among some who profess to be Bible-believing, conservative, and fundamental.

Mysticism is variously identified as spiritual insight, Christian consciousness, or the witness of the Spirit. This concept implies that the Christian has something within himself to which every external revelation is in subjection. Some mystics rejected the objective enunciation of God's will as found in the Scriptures in favor of the currents of thought and feeling which swept through their own souls.⁹

The current manifestation of this is seen among those who believe they will have a "witness of the Spirit" as to which translation is the Word of God, or what portions of various translations are God's Word. The extreme danger of this form of mysticism should be clear: It places the eternal, infallible Word of a righteous God in subjection to the fluctuating, whimsical feelings of men.

The Apostle Peter clearly pointed out that the ultimate authority is the written Word, *rather than any external manifestation that is subject to interpretation by the human senses.*

"There came such a voice to him from the excellent glory.... And this voice which came from heaven we heard.... We have also a more sure word of prophecy...the scripture...came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:17-21).

This is in reference to the audible voice which spoke from heaven in approval of Jesus; but we have a **MORE SURE WORD** than that: the Scripture, written by holy men carried along by the Holy Ghost. The audible voice was subject to the human sense of hearing: there could have been disagreement as to what was actually said. The written Word, the Scripture, is sure. There can be no debate about the actual words spoken, though there may, of course, be debate as to their meaning.

The Apostle Paul said, "...we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). Faith is a *spiritual* sense; sight is a *physical* sense. The Christian walk depends not upon the senses of the natural man, but the faith of the spiritual man.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that

he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is absolutely necessary to please God, and this faith is *presuppositional*:

1. Faith believes in God's existence
2. Faith believes God answers prayer

Faith is *not* based upon rationalism. Human reason has nothing to do with it. True faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith deals in those things that *are not seen*, things that are not discernible to the human senses, or by the natural mind.

. . . There are two methods of New Testament textual criticism, the *consistently Christian* and the *naturalistic* method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret these materials differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book. . . modern Bible-believing scholars have taken very little interest in the concept of consistently Christian New Testament textual criticism. For more than a century most of them have been quite content to follow in this area the naturalistic methods of Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort.¹⁰

One will either view the Scriptures as a *supernatural* entity,

unbreakable, miraculously preserved, or he will regard them from the naturalistic method as being subject to men (i.e. as to their protection, preservation, and purity). The latter view allows for accommodation of the view of W-H, that for some 1,500 years, mankind was without the pure Word of God. The Word of God was "lost," according to this view, and corrupted MSS predominated. Further, had not Tischendorf happened upon a wastebasket in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and had not an obscure MS been lifted from its unknown past in the Vatican, we might still be without the pure Word of God today, according to the naturalistic view.

Bentley, Zahn, Warfield, and countless others have tried to devise a theory of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures which leaves room for naturalistic New Testament textual criticism. But this is impossible, for the two concepts are mutually exclusive. Naturalistic New Testament textual criticism requires us to treat the text of the New Testament like the text of any other ancient book, in other words, to ignore or deny the special providential preservation of the Scriptures.¹¹

Warfield quotes Baxter:

. . . All that the holy writers have recorded is true (and no falsehood in the Scriptures but what is from the errors of scribes and translators).¹²

Obviously, this leaves us in the same position we would have been in if the original writers had made errors, for the original autographs are not available to us. If there is falsehood in the Scriptures as a result of error on the part of the scribes and translators, we can never know for sure what God said! While this view gives

lip service to inspiration, it allows no room for preservation. Thus, the inspiration becomes meaningless.

Warfield himself says it is

. . . A matter of common consent that the writers of the New Testament books looked upon what they called ‘Scripture’ as divinely safeguarded in even its verbal expression, and as divinely trustworthy in all its parts, in all its elements, and all its affirmations of whatever kind.¹³

If this is so, and it certainly is, why can we not believe the preservation of the Scripture is divinely safeguarded? *All of the affirmations as to original inspiration are worthless if we do not know what the originals said!* One of Warfield’s strongest testimonies is to the Scripture’s internal witness to its inspiration. But it testifies just as strongly to its preservation.

Can we subject the Holy Scriptures to rationalistic analysis? Can the Word of God be submitted to the same tests one would use to determine the original text of ancient MSS with human authors?

Pickering quotes Matthew Black:

The difference between sacred writings in constant popular and ecclesiastical use and the work of a classical author has never been sufficiently emphasized in the textual criticism of the New Testament. Principles valid for the textual restoration of Plato or Aristotle cannot be applied to sacred texts such as the Gospels (or the Pauline Epistles). We cannot assume that it is possible by a sifting of ‘scribal errors’ to arrive at the prototype or autograph text of the Biblical writer.¹⁴

The internal testimony of the Scripture is to its supernatural, God-given nature. God's promise to *preserve* and *keep* His words is recorded. No human author could make such a guarantee. God kept His promise. His Word was preserved to all generations through the great mass of Greek MSS in the New Testament, and the diligent efforts of the Jewish scribes in the Old Testament.

¹Josh McDowell, ed., *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Arrowhead Springs, San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972), p. 107.

²Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 296.

³Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1968), p. 259.

⁴Hilla, *Defended*, p. 90.

⁵Fuller, *True or False?*, pp. 105-6

⁶W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell Co., 1966), vol. 3, p. 89.

⁷Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 5.

⁸Stanley Upchurch, *Arguments Against the Bible* (Orlando, FL: Little Heaven Corp., 1980), pp. 17-18.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Hilla, *Defended*, p. 3.

¹¹Ibid., p. 111.

¹²B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publ. Co., 1967), p. 109.

¹³Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴Pickering, *Identity*, pp. 42, 43.

The King James Version Re-Evaluated

Among those who are not textual scholars, and who are not aware of the fundamental difference between the KJV and other modern versions, it is frequently said that new translations are needed because the language of the KJV is so "archaic" and "out-dated." It is suggested that the KJV is difficult for the "man on the street" to understand.

Those who are perhaps a bit more vicious will usually produce the stale, time-worn joke about some elderly lady who said, "If the King James Version was good enough for the Apostle Paul, it's good enough for me!" This is supposed to result in gales of laughter and a quick, undeniable recognition of the fact that, after all, the KJV was not written by the apostles, so therefore we need not retain it as the Holy Bible. When one considers the MS evidence and the other factors we will discuss in this chapter, however, it becomes quite clear that if the Apostle Paul were here today, the KJV in all probability would be good enough for him, especially

in view of the alternatives.

What is needed in our generation is a re-evaluation of the KJV, a fresh understanding of its background, and a new appreciation for those things which commends it to us.

The Origin of the King James Version

Many things go into the making of a Bible translation. While all Bible translators would insist they have the purest of motives, motives tend to be truly purified in times of pressure, struggle, and even persecution. The KJV is the product of such a time.

“Bloody Mary,” Mary Tudor, had tried mightily, but unsuccessfully, to surrender the Church of England to the Church of Rome. She was succeeded by Elizabeth, who reasserted the independence of the Church of England from Rome. Elizabeth, a devout queen, memorized theological writings in order to be able to carry on a conversation on such subjects. During her reign, the reformers returned to England from Geneva, Switzerland, where they had fled during the tenure of Mary Tudor. Geneva was of course the stronghold of John Calvin, and the reformers brought back with them a new translation of the Bible produced while in exile, the Geneva Bible. For some sixty years, this was the most important Bible in England.

In 1603 James, a distant relative of Elizabeth, ascended to the throne. His father was a French Catholic prince who had died at an early age, leaving James to be reared by the Scottish Presbyterian nobles in the pattern of John Knox, after the strict tradition of Calvinistic Presbyterianism. Though young, James was well educated and became king of both England and Scotland.

Shortly before this time, in 1582, the Catholic Jesuit Bible had been produced, and the devout Protestants believed it was spreading poison among the people. And though Protestant Bibles were

available, each seemed to have a shortcoming which prevented it from becoming the final standard in the English language. The Great Bible, though a parish favorite, was extremely cumbersome. The Genevan Bible included marginal notes offensive to some, including attacks on the divine right of kings. The Bishop's Bible was an inferior translation. So the question, as James was crowned, was similar to the question many are asking today, "Which Bible?"

The Puritan element in the Church of England was strong and increasing in influence. The Puritans were the strictest of the Protestants and objected to what they considered to be abuses within the church.

In January of 1604, at a conference of bishops and Puritan leaders held at Hampton Court, King James considered the Millenary Petition, so called because it was signed by some 1,000 ministers. Among other things, Dr. John Reynolds, the Puritan who presented the petition, requested that King James authorize a new translation of the Bible, "such versions as are extant not answering to the original."¹ The new translation was to include no notes or comments. King James, a scholar who had done some translating himself, favored such a translation. By July of that year, he had appointed fifty-four men to participate in the translating. They were among the best scholars in all of England. In addition, King James urged these men to gain the assistance of all the other learned men of their acquaintance. Thus, though the number of official translators shrank to forty-seven through deaths and withdrawals, the actual number of participants in the translation is unknown. The charge given by King James was that the translation be an exact rendering of the text.

Wilkinson says,

**The King James Bible was translated when England
was fighting her way out from Roman Catholicism to**

Protestantism;⁶ whereas, the Revised Version was born after fifty years (1833-1883) of terrific Romanizing campaigns, when one convulsion after another rocked the mental defenses of England and broke down the ascendancy of the Protestant mentality in that empire. The King James Version was born of the Reformation; the Revised Versions and some modern Bibles were born of Higher Criticism and Romanizing activities. . . .²

"The KJV was the crowning fruit of a series of translations made in the Reformation period—Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthews, Geneva, and Bishops' Bible.

The spiritual climate during the era of King James was in prime condition for the translating of the Bible. The overriding concern was for purity, simplicity, and truth. The KJV was the product of such concern.

The Translators of the King James Version

The fifty-four men appointed by King James were among the most learned scholars of the day. The Puritan element on the committee was strong. Of the number of men involved, Paine says,

Though the king had named fifty-four learned men, he intended many more to share in the work. Some lists today name only forty-seven but I have found more than the fifty-four, if we include replacements for those who died. The final version contains contributions from countless unknown linguists.³

Miles Smith said of those chosen to do the translation:

...There were many chosen that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise. . . . And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of wit, or deepness of judgement, as it were in an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in him that hath the key of David, opening, and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord, the Father of our Lord, to the effect that S. Augustine did: *O let thy Scriptures be my pure delight, let me not be deceived in them, neither let me deceive by them.*⁴

Who were these men, and what was their background?

Dr. Lancelot Andrewes

Born in 1555, Andrewes was from a youth "totally addicted to the study of good letters," in the words of his biographer. He "studied so hard when others played that if his parents and masters had not forced him to play with them, all the play would have been marred." As a young student at the university, "he never loved or used any games of ordinary recreation, either within doors as cards, dice, table chess, or abroad as bats, quoits, bowls, or any such, but his ordinary exercise and his recreation was walking, either alone by himself or with some other selected companion, with whom he might confer or argue, and recount their studies." After finishing his studies at Pembroke, Cambridge, where he earned the B.A., M.A., and divinity degrees, he gave lectures on the Ten Commandments at three o'clock in the afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays. In 1586, at the age of 31, he was made one of the twelve chaplains to Queen Elizabeth. In 1601 Elizabeth made him Dean of Westminster, where three times a week or more often he called the

brightest students to his home and, from eight until eleven o'clock at night, instructed them in Greek and Hebrew. Andrewes knew fifteen languages and was so skilled in their use that someone suggested he could have "served as an interpreter general at the confusion of tongues."⁵

Dr. John Reynolds

The Puritan who had represented their view to King James at Hampton Court, Dr. Reynolds had, as a youth, been converted from Roman Catholicism. At Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he "wholly addicted himself" to the study of the Scriptures. He read all of the Latin and Greek fathers and all the ancient records of the church that he could find. In 1592 he wrote a pamphlet, "The Overthrow of Stage Plays," in which he insisted, based on Deuteronomy 22:5, that it is sinful for a man to wear a woman's clothing, as was commonly done on the English stage. His concern for morality is seen in the pamphlet, where he asserted, "They meditate how they may inflame a teuder youth with love, entice him to dalliance, to whoredom, to incest, inure their minds and bodies to uncomely, dissolute, railing, boasting, knavish, foolish, brainsick, drunken conceits, words and gestures." Reynolds also attacked other current forms of entertainment: "You say that there is a time for sports, plays, dances, a time for earnest studies. . . . Time of recreation is necessary, I grant, and think as necessary for scholars that are scholars indeed. . . . Yet, in my opinion, it were not fit for them to play at stool ball among wenches, nor at mum ehance and maw with idle loose companions, nor at trunks in guildhalls, nor to dance about the maypole, nor to rifle in ale houses, nor to carouse in taverns, nor to rob orchards." He was said to have a phenomenal memory.⁶

Dr. Laurence Chaderton

Also a convert from Roman Catholicism, Chaderton resisted his father's tempting offer of thirty pounds a year to renounce Protestantism. His father wrote: "Son Laurence, if you will renounce the new sect which you have joined, you may expect all the happiness which the care of an indulgent father can assure you; otherwise, I enclose a shilling to buy a wallet. Go and beg." Chaderton studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish. He lectured at St. Clement's, Cambridge, for fifty years. Forty clergymen said they owed their conversion to his preaching. He never kept a servant from attending church, saying, "I desire as much to have my servants know the Lord as myself." Until the time of his death at 94, he was able to read his small type Greek New Testament.⁷⁸

Dr. John Overall

An orphan as a small boy, Overall became a man of "prodigious" learning, with "a strong brain to improve his great reading." Though he was accounted one of the most "learned, controversial divines of his day," his tenderness is seen in a quote from him when he was vicar at Epping: "I was requested to come visit some of my parish that were sick, and coming I found them sicker in mind than body. The thing that troubled their minds, so they said, was this. They could not be persuaded that Christ died for them. Wherein, having by the comforts of the gospel, as I thought best, somewhat eased and persuaded them, I took occasion afterward in my sermon, for their sakes, to handle this point. . . . Christ is the sum or righteousness, the water of life, the heavenly medicine."⁷⁹

Dr. Adrian Saravia

The oldest of the translators, Saravia was born of a Spanish father and Flemish mother. He had first-hand knowledge of Spanish and Dutch scholars, which aided the translators.^{10 11}

Dr. John Layfield

Skilled in architecture, Dr. Layfield's judgment was of great value in the translation of the passages dealing with the tabernacle and temple. He was a Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge in 1585 and Greek lecturer in 1593. Afterwards, he traveled abroad, returning to become rector of St. Clement Danes in London.^{12 13}

Richard Thomson

One of the younger translators in the Westminster Hebrew group, Thomson earned his B.A. at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and his M.A. from both Cambridge and Oxford. He was described by Richard Montagu as "a most admirable philologer. . .better known in Italy, France and Germany than at home."^{14 15}

William Bedwell

Having earned his M.A. from St. John's College, Cambridge, Bedwell became known as "the Father of Arabic studies in England." He authored the *Lexicon Heptaglotton* in seven folio volumes, including Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldee, and Arabic. Not only was he an Oriental scholar, but a mathematician, and possessed a fine library of books on mathematics and astronomy.^{16 17}

Dr. Richard Clarke

A fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, Clarke was one of six preachers at Canterbury Cathedral and also preached at the famous Church of Christ, Canterbury. In one of his sermons, he said, "There are two sorts of atheism, mental and vocal. . . . I pardon the mouth atheist. For he that shall openly say, There is no God, will ipso facto be thought beside himself. Or if he seem to have his wits, yet they that bear him will abhor him; they will stop their ears against his blasphemy, they will hiss at him, they will spit at him; his impious assertion shall not stumble any one. But the heart atheist that saith God is, but thinks it not, and lives accordingly, ungodly, unrighteously, unsoberly. . . . his sin is greater than his hypocrisy."¹¹

Dr. William Barlow

Barlow earned the B.A. and M.A. at St. John's, Cambridge, and the B.D. at Trinity Hall, where he was later given the D.D. Becoming the Bishop of Rochester in 1605, it was said that he was "one of the youngest in age, but one of the ripest in learning."¹²

Dr. John Spenser

Spenser was rector of several churches at once. In 1577 he earned his B.A. at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he later received the degree of doctor of divinity. He later became president of Corpus Christi College.¹³

Dr. Thomas Holland

Holland was so familiar with the church fathers that it was said it was as if "himself had been one of them." While he worked

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on the Bible, he spent much time in fervent prayer and meditation and looked forward with increasing anticipation for heaven. He was strongly opposed to Rome, and, when leaving the college, would call the men together and “commend them to the love of God and to the abhorrence of popery.” According to his biographer, “He loved and he longed for God, for the presence of God, and for the full enjoyment of Him. His soul was framed for heaven, and could find no rest till it came there. His dying prayer was—‘Come, O come, Lord Jesus, Thou Morning Star! Come, Lord Jesus; I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Thee!’ ” His degrees included the B.A., M.A., B.D., and D.D.^{23 24}

Dr. Richard Kilbye

An expert Hebrew and Greek scholar, Kilbye was also an ardent preacher. In a sermon titled “The Burden of a Loaden Conscience,” he implored, “All manner of people, young and old, take heed by me. Have no more Gods but one. . . . Consider well what He hath done for you. He made you at the first like unto Himself, in wisdom and holiness, and when you were by sin made like the devil, and must therefore have been condemned to hell torments, God sent His only son who taking him a body and soul, was a man and suffered great wrong and shameful death, to secure your pardon, and to buy you out of the devil’s bondage, that ye might be renewed to the likeness of God. . . .to the end ye might be fit to keep company with all saints in the joys of heaven.” Holding the degrees of B.A., M.A., B.D., and D.D., he authored a work on Exodus from Hebrew commentators.^{25 26}

Dr. Miles Smith

As comfortable with Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic as

his native tongue, Smith was one of the men who went over the final translation one last time. Though a man of heavy responsibility, he once terminated a serious discourse to see a poor minister, insisting, "But he must not wait, lest we seem to take state upon us." Dr. Smith, M.A., D.D., also composed the classic translator's preface, "The Translators to the Reader."²¹ ²²

This selection of but a dozen of the men who labored on the translation serves to give one an overview of the quality of scholarship and character represented by the translators. Above all, these men believed the Holy Bible to be the inspired, infallible Word of God and understood full well that their task was a sacred one. As Wilkinson says,

The translators of the King James, moreover, had something beyond great scholarship and unusual skill. They had gone through a period of great suffering. They had offered their lives that the truths which they loved might live.²³

"This is especially true of the earlier translators who labored in the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary. The King James translators built upon a foundation well and truly laid by the martyrs of the previous century."²⁴

The Method of the King James Version

The method by which the KJV was translated is this: The total group of translators was divided up into six companies, each with a specific portion of Scripture to render into English. Each individual member of the group was to translate the entire passage first, then submit it to the other members of the committee on which he served. The committee, comparing each individual translation

thus reuidered, would then settle on the final draft of the passage. These drafts were then submitted to the other committees, who went over them as well. In the end, the entire work was gone over by a select committee, then once again by two of that group. Thus, every portion of Scripture was gone over at least fourteen times before it was presented to the press.

The rules by which the translation was to be carried out are as follows:

1. The ordinary Bible read in church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.
2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers with the other names of the text to be retained as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.
3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, viz. the word "church" not to be translated "congregation."
4. When a word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by most of the ancient fathers.
5. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all or as little as may be.
6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution be so briefly and fitly expressed in the text.
7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit reference of one scripture to another.
8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together to confer when they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand.

9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful in this point.
10. If any company upon the review of the book so sent doubt or differ upon any place, to send them word thereof with the place, and withal send the reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting which is to be of the chief persons of each company at the end of the work.
11. When any place of special obscurity be doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place.
12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of his translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as being skillful in the tongues and having taken pains in that way, to send his particular observations to the company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.
13. The directors of each company to be the deans of Westminster and Chester for that place, and the King's professors in Hebrew or Greek in either university.
14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible—Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.
15. Besides the said directors before mentioned, three or four of the most ancient and grave divines in either of the universities, not employed in translating, to be assigned by the vice-chancellor, upon conference with the rest of the heads, to be overseers of the translation, as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the fourth rule above specified.²⁰

The translation of the KJV, as contrasted with that of the RV, was a public matter. Rather than the secrecy which surrounded the introduction of W-H's Greek text and the subsequent translation, the men of the KJV openly shared their work with those not even involved directly with the translation, asking their counsel and advice.

The Text of the King James Version

We notice that the KJV stands apart from all other translations on every point, its origin, its translators, its method, its language, its acceptance, but the most significant difference of all is that of the text used.

Miles Smith said,

If you ask what they had before them, truly it was the *Hebrew* text of the Old Testament, the *Greek* of the New... whence should a translation be made, but out of them? . . . Neither did we run over the work with. . .haste. . .neither were we harred or hindered from going over it again, having once done it. . .neither. . .were we the first that fell in hand with translating the Scripture into English, and consequently destitute of former helps. . . . Neither did we think much to consult the translators or commentators, *Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin*, no, nor the *Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch*; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see.³¹

We have already discussed the text upon which the KJV is based. The Masoretic in the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus in the New Testament undergirded their work. But they consulted many other authorities and sources before making their final decisions.

The Masoretic text was that which had been preserved by the Jewish scribes down through the centuries, by their painstaking and perfectionist efforts. Robert Dick Wilson, the brilliant master of forty-five languages, devoted his life to the study of the Old Testament. He indicated that there was not a page about which we need have any doubt.

The text of the New Testament is that which is seen in the vast majority of all extant MSS, to this day. The KJV was the last of the great English translations to be rendered from the Majority Text.

The Language of the King James Version

It is common for the critics of the KJV to build their strongest case for the need for modern translations on the supposed archaic nature of the language of this venerable translation. It is said that the words and language usage are outdated, that modern people cannot properly understand them, and that this alone is reason enough for a new version.

Such arguments are not new. The first modern-speech English versions appeared in the eighteenth century, prepared by deists who disliked the language of the KJV. Daniel Mace, in 1729, published a Greek New Testament text with a translation in the language of his day. Mace translated Matthew 6:16 thus: "When ye fast, don't put on a dismal air, as the hypocrites do." I Corinthians 13:4 appeared as, "Social affection is patient, is kind." He rendered James 3:6, "The tongue is a brand that sets the whole world in a combustion. . tipp'd with infernal sulphur it sets the whole train of life in a blaze."²²

His, and others, efforts were destined to fall into disuse, however, as the common people—who were supposed to be unable to understand the KJV, continued its use.

The language of the KJV has been termed “Elizabethan” and “Shakespearean.” But

. . . The English of the King James Version is not the English of the early 17th century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. It is biblical English, which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version. . . . The King James Version. . . owes its merit, not to 17th-century English—which was very different—but to its faithful translation of the original. Its style is that of the Hebrew and of the New Testament Greek.³³

But what of the words which, to us, seem strange; would it not be wise to change “thee” and “thou” to “you,” and to make other modernizations of the “outdated” English?

Even in their use of *thee* and *thou* the translators were not following 17th-century English usage but biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural *you* in polite conversation.³⁴

Though the translators of the King James Version could have made a “modern-speech” translation for their day, using “you” as do today’s modern-speech versions, they retained “thee” and “thou.” Why? The significance is seen when we realize that “thee” and “thou” *can only be singular*, while “you” can be either singular or plural. The translators of the KJV used “thee” and “thou” in

reference to God, thus indicating His essential oneness.

The language of the KJV is much more precise than the depraved English of our day. It is English at the peak of perfection:

. . . The English of the King James is not nearly so archaic or difficult to follow as its critics allege. In fact, it is in general written in a much simpler vocabulary, with a higher percentage of one- and two-syllable words, than almost any of the modern translations. The honest reader will find it at least as easy to understand as any other. Most of the truly archaic expressions were modernized in a late eighteenth-century revision, in fact, so that the language as found in the King James actually is quite characteristic of the vocabulary of the late colonial period while still retaining the beauty and power of expression of the English of the Elizabethan era.²⁴

Rushdoony says,

At the time of the Reformation you had classic translations, magnificent ones, made into a variety of languages. Luther's translation into German, for example, and the King James Version into English. . . one of the things that these translations have done has been to give fixity to the language. When the King James was translated, it was more old fashioned and obsolete than it is today. The translators went back to a very old fashioned basic Anglo-Saxon kind of English which was alien to the spoken and written language of their day. But they wanted to get to a basic English, and they did. The English language has departed from that again and again. But every time there's been a great revival it [has] gone back to the basically simple

English such as the King James has in its pages. . . . This has meant that since the early sixteen hundreds to the present, we have an English language that is comprehensible to us. [If] you go back a hundred years or so before the King James English you'll find the language a little difficult to understand. You have to almost learn it. [If] you go back to Chaucer. . .you can see how different the language is. . .the pronounciation is even more different because there was no fixity. . .but [if] you go back a hundred years before Chaucer. . .it's hopeless. . . . But the Bible has given fixity to the modern languages of Europe and this has made progress possible. . . .³⁶

Specific words which would be foreign to the average reader are few, and their meaning is often easily cleared up in the margin, or can certainly be determined by consulting any reputable dictionary. Would we expect a person to read a book of the magnitude, majesty, and nature of the Holy Bible, and be able to breeze through it as easily as a novel? It is surely not unreasonable to expect to do a certain amount of study and research when one comes to the Holy Scriptures.

Any perceived “archaisms” found in the KJV form no basis for an entirely new translation. Such thinking would, if followed to its logical conclusion, demand that we reduce the language of the Holy Word to the lowest common denominator, on the same level with the newspaper and funny papers. But the force of the Word of God has always been to lift people up to its level, rather than to sink to the level of the lowest vocabulary and grammar.

It is safe to predict that all modern-speech versions will ultimately suffer the fate of their predecessors. After much advertisement, promotion, and some acceptance, they will gradually fade into the background. The language changes so quickly through colloquialisms,

slang, and evolving word definitions, that any translation based on the language of today will be out of date tomorrow. But, if the past is any guide for the future, it is to be expected that the KJV will continue, as it has for the past three and one half centuries, to be "the Bible" to the vast majority of believers. Though its detractors speak in strongly emotional terms about the "dethroning of the *Textus Receptus*," and the "overthrow" and "final defense" of that God inspired and preserved text, it continues right on to survive all attempts to dislodge it from its place of prominence and honor.

Dr. F. William Faber said, of the KJV,

It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind and the anchor of national seriousness. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments; and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible.³⁷

H. L. Mencken, though he did not follow the worship taught in it, had only praise for the KJV:

It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, it is probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world. Many attempts have been made to purge it of its errors and obscurities.

An English Revised Version was published in 1885 and an American Revised Version in 1901, and since then many learned but misguided men have sought to produce translations that should be mathematically accurate, and in the plain speech of everyday. But the Authorized Version has never yielded to any of them, for it is palpably and overwhelmingly better than they are, just as it is better than the Greek New Testament, or the Vulgate, or the Septuagint. Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure, eloquent, and lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry, at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of.³⁸

It is not likely that such a book will soon be replaced in favor of another.

The Acceptance of the King James Version

Within fifty years of its release, the King James Version became the overwhelming favorite of the people. This was, and remains, its true "authorization." As Hills suggests, the common people seem to have an unerring ability to sort out the true Word of God.

While some one hundred different translations have been rendered since the KJV, and though millions of dollars have been spent in their promotion (promotion which, at the same time, finds it necessary to belittle the KJV), each has gradually, quietly, passed into disuse. The "common-speech" versions of the early part of this century, when compared with the KJV, seem hopelessly out of date.

We would surely be blinded to fail to recognize the hand of God in this remarkable preservation of the KJV.

¹Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 1.

²Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 180.

³Paine, *The Men*, p. 21.

⁴Miles Smith, *The Translators to the Reader* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1911), pp. 28, 30.

⁵Paine, *The Men*, pp. 16-20.

⁶Ibid., pp. 22-24.

⁷Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 20.

⁸Paine, *The Men*, pp. 26, 27.

⁹Ibid., pp. 30-34.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 34, 35.

¹¹Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 14.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Paine, *The Men*, pp. 35-39.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 39, 40.

¹⁵Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 15.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Paine, *The Men*, p. 40.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 42.

²⁰Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 15.

²¹Ibid., p. 16.

²²Paine, *The Men*, pp. 43, 44.

²³Fuller, *Which Bible*, pp. 16, 17.

²⁴Paine, *The Men*, p. 47.

²⁵Ibid., p. 48.

²⁶Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 17.

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²⁷Ibid., pp. 17, 18

²⁸Paine, *The Men*, pp. 49, 50.

²⁹Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 258.

³⁰Paine, *The Men*, pp. 70, 71.

³¹Smith, *Translators*, pp. 30, 31.

³²Hills, *Defended*, p. 225.

³³Ibid., p. 218.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Henry M. Morris, *The Bible Has the Answer* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1976), p. 12.

³⁶Rousas Rushdoony, "Life or Death in the Schools?" 14, tape recording by He Rose Enterprises.

³⁷Paine, *The Men*, pp. vii., viii.

³⁸Ibid., p. viii.

An Evaluation Of The New Versions

As we have seen, the fundamental difference between the KJV and virtually every English translation since that time is the text upon which they are based, particularly the Greek text of the New Testament. The KJV followed the Majority Text represented by some 80-90% of all extant Greek MSS, early versions, church fathers, and lectionaries. The revisers from those of 1881 on have almost invariably followed the eclectic text of W-H, represented by a mere handful of MSS, more particularly by Codex Sinaiticus, and finally, if the two disagreed, by Codex Vaticanus. It is true that those responsible for the first printed Greek texts, including Erasmus, did not have large numbers of MSS at their disposal. But the MSS they did have were representative of the broad stream of MS tradition. And the MSS discovered since these early printed texts were first issued have been seen to agree with the Majority Text in the above percentage.

But apart from this fundamental difference of texts, the newer versions seem to have other differences from the KJV: the theology of the translators, their view of Biblical inspiration, their motive

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for rendering the translation, and their method in rendering it. It will be informative to examine some of these aspects of the translations which have been made since 1611. We will not examine them all, just those which are better known and are representative of the newer versions.

The Revised Version

It may be thought strange that we would reexamine the circumstances surrounding the RV of 1881. But the reason is simple: *The RV, rather than being a true revision at all, was a new translation based on the new text formulated by W-H, and it is that text, to the largest degree, which forms the basis for the modern versions.*

We have already examined the two MSS which were almost slavishly followed in the construction of the text for the RV New Testament; they have been found lacking. But what of the men who translated the RV? And what method was used in determining what would in their opinion, be the true text? We will examine both of these questions in turn.

The Translators

Dr. G. Vance Smith

Minister of St. Saviour's Gate Unitarian Chapel, York, Smith was seated on the revision committee in the face of a storm of protest from conservative scholars and ministers. Dr. Westcott invited Smith to participate in a Communion service in Westminster Abbey with the other revisers. In a letter to *The Times* dated July 11, 1870, Smith asserted that he "received the sacrament without joining in the Creed and without compromise of his principles as a 'Unitarian.'"¹ He, of course, denied the deity of Jesus Christ.

This evoked a solemn protest signed by several thousand clergy, and a resolution of the Upper House of Convocation in February, 1871, "That it is the judgment of this House that no person who denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be invited to join either company to which is committed the revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures³. . . and that any such person now on either company should cease to act therewith."³

This solemn act had no effect; Smith remained on the committee. In fact, Westcott and Hort threatened to resign if Smith were forced out. As would be expected, Smith was satisfied with the change of I Timothy 3:16 from "God was manifest" to "who was manifest." Smith commented,

The old reading has been pronounced untenable by the Revisers, as it has been known to be by all careful students of the New Testament. . . . It is another example of the facility with which ancient copiers could introduce the word "God" into their manuscripts—a reading which was the natural result of a growing tendency in early Christian times to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as "God manifested in the flesh."⁴

Smith understood full well that the RV did not just "say the same thing in a different way." He did not, for one moment, fall for the ploy of conservative sympathizers who insist that it matters little which translation you use, since the doctrines are the same anyway. He said,

Since the publication of the revised New Testament, it has been frequently said that the changes of translation

which the work contains are of little importance from a doctrinal point of view. . . . To the writer, any such statement appears to be in the most substantial sense contrary to the facts of the case.⁵

Dr. Smith's book, *Bible and Theology*, revealed his beliefs to be practically that of Christianized infidelity.⁶

Dean Stanley

This member of the revision committee did not believe that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses. Indeed, he professed that the first five books of the Bible "are colored not unfrequently by the necessary infirmities which belong to the human instruments by which they were conveyed. . . ."⁷ He described as "modern dogmatists" those who "believe the Bible, and the Bible only."⁸ "Dean Stanley believed that the Word of God did not dwell in the Bible alone, but that it dwelt in the sacred books of other religions as well."⁹

J. H. Newman

Formerly an Oxford divine, Newman was made a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church after he left the Church of England. His Gnosticism is described by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman:

From the fathers, Newman also derived a speculative angelology which described the unseen universe as inhabited by hosts of intermediate beings who were spiritual agents between God and creation. . . . Indeed, Newman's cosmogony was essentially Gnostic, and echoed the teachings of Cerinthus, who is best entitled to be considered as the link between the Judaizing and Gnostic sects.¹⁰

"Cardinal Newman believed that tradition and the Catholic

Church were above the Bible."¹¹

Dr. Philip Schaff

Dr. Schaff, President of the two American Committees of Revision, was identified by the old conservative *Princeton Review* as "an apostle of . . . modern Gnosticism."

The roads which lead to Rome are very numerous. . . . Another road, less frequented and less obvious, but not less dangerous, is the philosophical. There is a strong affinity between the speculative system of development, according to which every thing that is, is true and rational, and the Romish idea of a self-evolving infallible church.... No one can read the exhibitions of the Church and of theology written even by Protestants under the influence of the speculative philosophy, without seeing that little more than a change of terminology is required to turn such philosophy into Romanism. Many distinguished men have already in Germany passed, by this bridge, from philosophical skepticism to the Romish Church. A distinct class of the Romanizing portion of the Church of England belongs to this philosophical category. Dr. Nevin had entered this path long before Dr. Schaff came from Germany to point it out to him.¹²

Dr. Schaff, associated with the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, was almost solely responsible for arranging scholars in America to cooperate with those who were working on the revision in England. The American committees (the Old Testament company with fourteen members, and the New Testament with thirteen) were little more than reviewing bodies, not having the authority to effect changes in the translation. However, the

differences of these two groups were few. Schaff had a “revolutionary influence on American theology through his bold Romanizing policy.”¹³

German philosophy early taught the development of humanity through the self-evolution of the absolute spirit. The outstanding advocates of this latter philosophy, Schelling and Hegel, were admitted pantheists. Their theory was applied to theology in the hands of Schleiermacher whose follower was Dr. Schaff, and whom Dr. Schaff characterizes as “the greatest theological genius” since the Reformation. He also said, “There is not to be found now a single theologian of importance, in whom the influence of his great mind is not more or less to be traced.” The basis of Schleiermacher’s philosophy and theology was acknowledged by such men as Dorner to be “Thoroughly pantheistic.”¹⁴

It is no wonder then, that when Dr. Schaff sat in the Parliament of Religions at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893, he was “so happy among the Buddhists, Confucianists, Shintoists, and other world religions, that he said he would be willing to die among them.”¹⁵

W. F. Moulton

Along with Thirwall, Westcott, Hort, and Milligan, Moulton was influenced by the teaching of Coleridge, a contemporary of Schleiermacher, who “had been to Germany and returned a fervent devotee of its theology and textual criticism. . . . His influence upon his own age, and especially upon its younger men of genius, was greater than that of any other Englishman.” Coleridge is variously identified as “Unitarian,” “Metaphysical,” and “Pantheistic.” It is said that he held “views of inspiration as low as the rationalists.”¹⁶

"Dr. Moulton favored those modern rules . . . which, if followed in translating the Greek, would produce results different from that of the King James."¹¹ His devotion to the Roman Catholic Vulgate may be seen in his own words:

The Latin translation, being derived from manuscripts more ancient than any we now possess, is frequently a witness of the highest value in regard to the Greek text which was current in the earliest times, and. . . its testimony is in many cases confirmed by Greek manuscripts which have been discovered since the 16th century.¹²

Wilkinson sums up Moulton's position:

. . . Dr. Moulton looked upon the Vulgate as a witness superior to the King James, and upon the Greek manuscripts which formed the base of the Vulgate as superior to the Greek manuscripts which formed the base of the King James. Furthermore, he said, speaking of the Jesuit New Testament of 1582. "The Rhemish Testament agrees with the best critical editions of the present day." Dr. Molton, therefore, not only believed the manuscripts which were recently discovered to be similar to the Greek manuscripts from which the Vulgate was translated, but he also looked upon the Greek New Testaments of Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles, built largely upon the same few manuscripts, as "the best critical editions." Since he exercised so large an influence in selecting the other members of the Committee, we can divine at the outset the attitude of mind which would likely prevail in the Revision Committee.¹³

Westcott and Hort

In Chapter Two of this work, we dealt with the beliefs of these

two men, who, we could say, were the *principle* voices on the revision committee. It was their Greek text, which had been some twenty-eight years in development, that was accepted by the majority of the revisers as the basis for their work in the New Testament.

Both men had strong sympathies with Romanism and rejected the Scriptural account of Creation.

Were there none who approached the revision with more noble motives and an intention to carry out the commission given by the southern half of the Church of England, i.e. to simply *revise* the KJV where *necessary*? Yes, there were Wilberforce and Scrivener. But Wilberforce resigned in protest over the seating of the Unitarian on the committee, and Dr. Scrivener was left with a minority position to attempt to vindicate the Majority Text against the preconceived attacks of W-H.

F. H. Scrivener

Sir Robert Anderson describes the challenge before the revisers:

The question at issue between the majority of the Revisers, who followed Doctors Hort and Westcott, and the very able and weighty minority led by Dr. Scrivener, the most capable and eminent “textual critic” of the whole company, was one with which every lawyer is familiar, but of which the Revisers may have had no experience, and with which they were not competent to deal.²⁰

That Hort and Scrivener were on opposite sides of the issue is pointed out by Alfred Martin:

It soon became evident that the New Testament committee was not going to be content merely to revise the Authorized Version, but was determined to revise the

underlying Greek text radically. . . . Hort became the leading spokesman for the views which he and Westcott advocated; Scrivener usually spoke for the other side. Most of the members of the committee were not textual critics, and were not at home in this area of discussion.²¹

Scrivener had no sympathy for the naturalistic system developed by W-H. He said,

Dr. Hort's system, therefore, is entirely destitute of historical foundation. He does not so much as make a show of pretending to it: but then he would persuade us, as he has persuaded himself, that its substantial truth is proved by results; and for results of themselves to establish so very much, they must needs be unequivocal, and admit of no logical escape from the conclusions they lead up to. . . . With all our reverence for his [Hort's] genius, and gratitude for much we have learnt from him in the course of our studies, we are compelled to repeat as emphatically as ever our strong conviction that the hypothesis to whose proof he has devoted so many labourious years, is destitute not only of historical foundation, but of all probability resulting from the internal goodness of the text which its adoption would force upon us.²²

Wilkinson makes an observation on Scrivener's abilities:

The minority in the Committee was represented principally by Dr. Scrivener, probably the foremost scholar of the day in the manuscripts of the Greek New Testament and the history of the Text. If we may believe the words of Chairman Ellicott, the countless divisions in the

Committee over the Greek Text “was often a kind of critical duel between Dr. Hort and Dr. Scrivener.” Dr. Scrivener was continuously and systematically out-voted.²³

Doubtless, a major reason W-H were successful in seeing their Greek text adopted by the committee is that they carefully planned their strategy in advance. By coming into the session with Lightfoot already agreed with them, they presented a united front which must have been formidable to those among them who did not have the background in textual criticism to qualify them for such decisions.²⁴

There were, of course, others on the revision committees, but those of which we have here spoken were the most influential. Particularly, W-H were successful in persuading the majority of the members to adopt the readings favorable to their privately constructed text.

In view of all the facts it seems clear that, not until after the Committee had disbanded, and their work had come under the scrutiny of able scholars and faithful men, were they themselves aware that they had seemingly given their official sanction to the substitution of the “New Greek Text” of Westcott and Hort for the Textus Receptus. The Westcott and Hort Text had not yet been published, and hence had never been subjected to scrutiny and criticism; nor had the principles upon which it was constructed been investigated. Only after it was too late were the facts realized, even by the Revisers themselves.²⁵

Nor is it difficult to understand. . .that many of their less resolute and decided colleagues must often have been completely carried off their feet by the persuasiveness and resourcefulness, and zeal of Hort, backed by the great prestige of Lightfoot, the popular Canon of St. Paul’s, and

the quiet determination of Westcott, who set his face as a flint. In fact, it can hardly be doubted that Hort's was the strongest will of the whole Company, and his adroitness in debate was only equaled by his pertinacity.²⁴

How was the business of determining text and translation carried out? It is surprising to discover that such a solemn duty was administered in a most amateurish manner.

How the Revision Was Accomplished

One would think, due to the sacred nature of the task at hand, that the revisers would follow a most careful and detailed plan in the matters of determining the proper textual reading, and the correct translation. Surely, each member of the committee would personally, carefully, examine all the evidence for every single word, and would refuse to accept any "hearsay" testimony. Sadly, such was not the case.

The method followed was simple: When the Committee had assembled, the passage being considered was read. The Chairman would then ask, "Are any Textual changes proposed?" If such a change was proposed, two men spoke: Drs. Scrivener and Hort. The former spoke in favor of the Received Text, while the latter, of course, favored the reading of the text he had developed with Westcott. Then the matter was subjected to the entire Committee for a vote. The majority ruled, and then the Chairman would ask for proposals on the translation.^{25 26}

Thus it appears that there was no attempt whatever on the part of the Revisionists to examine the evidence bearing upon the many disputed readings. They only listened to the views of two of their number (one of whom as we

have seen, was fatally obsessed by a vicious theory) and thereupon, in summary fashion, they “settled” the Text by a majority vote. *Can we possibly have any confidence in a Text that was “settled” by such a slap-dash method?*²⁹

It seems too much to ask reasonable people to accept a translation, or a series of translations (meaning those based on the W-H theory which have followed the RV) which departs from the Majority Text in the New Testament in some 6,000 places in the Greek alone, which departures were based solely on the majority vote of a committee admittedly already in favor of such alterations, following a debate by only two men! What a casual manner in which to determine the Word of God!

But then, there were those who, though in favor of the revision, doubted that the actual text of God’s word could ever be restored. Dorus Clarke, writing in advance of the revision, said,

The time has not come,—perhaps will never come, unless some Tischendorf discovers the Apostolic autographs themselves,—to settle upon a text which is absolutely correct. The Revisers will therefore be obliged, by a comparison of all the ancient MSS. which are known, to form their own text. . .as they proceed with their work.³⁰

Clarke optimistically predicted that the revisers would need to compare “all the ancient MSS” in order to “form their own text.” They were to do this “as they proceed.” This was not done. In truth, the comparison had already been done beforehand by W-H (though it wasn’t really a comparison of *all* the MSS; B and Aleph were given the preference), and the rest of the committee had to make the decision to side with them or Scrivener, almost purely on the basis of oral arguments alone.

Every single word, indeed every letter, should have been examined carefully, not by one or two men, but by the whole of conservative scholarship, before even ONE change was effected!

Concerning the method by which the revision was accomplished, Sir Edmund Beckett, in his book, *Should the Revised Be Authorized?*, said, "if the process whereby the Revisionists 'settled' the Greek alterations is not a joke, it is quite enough to 'settle' this Revised Greek Testament in a very different sense."²¹

How different all of this is than the method and men used in the translation of the KJV. It is doubtful, however, if things have much improved in subsequent translations.

Revised Standard Version

The RSV, while admitting that the KJV "became the 'Authorized Version' of the English-speaking peoples,"²² nevertheless claimed that

The King James Version has grave defects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that these defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision of the English Translation.²³

The American version of the Revised Version was copyrighted (the American Standard Version), and the copyright was passed to the International Council of Religious Education in 1928. In 1937 a decision was made to revise the ASV, and the publication of the RSV was authorized in 1951 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

In the Preface, the translators make it clear that the fundamental difference between the RSV and the KJV is that of the underlying text, especially in the New Testament.

The problem of establishing the correct Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament is very different from the corresponding problem in the New Testament. For the New Testament we have a large number of Greek manuscripts, preserving many variant forms of the text. Some of them were made only two or three centuries later than the original composition of the books. For the Old Testament only late manuscripts survive...based on a standardized form of the text established many centuries after the books were written.

The present revision is based on the consonantal Hebrew and Aramaic text as fixed early in the Christian era and revised by Jewish scholars (the "Masoretes") of the sixth to ninth centuries....

Sometimes it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission, but none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text.³⁴

At first, we are led to think that, because the problem of establishing the text of the New Testament is "very different" from that of the Old Testament, perhaps the text of the Old Testament is quite firmly settled. But we then note that the text used for the Old Testament by the RSV translators was "established many centuries *after* the books were written." (Italics mine.) Not only that, but this text has "suffered in transmission" and "satisfactory restoration" has not been forthcoming. We are left to trust the "best judgment of competent scholars." And then we have only a "probable reconstruction of the original text"! This, of course, is simply the revisers' *opinion* of the Masoretic text, which has been preserved with great diligence through the providence of God by Jewish scribes

for many centuries. Earlier, we considered some of the aspects of this preservation. We will now permit Clarke to speak on the subject.

The Hebrew text of the Old Testament was executed by the Jewish copyists with the most jealous, the most extreme, and even the most superstitious care. Every copy must be transcribed from approved manuscripts only, with pure ink, and on parchments expressly prepared for the purpose. No word could be written, till it was first orally pronounced by the copyist. No palimpsests were allowed to be used. It has been said that it required a "cart-load" of parchments to make a single Bible. This involved, of course, a very large expense. Hence copyists were under a strong temptation to use palimpsests, or parchments from which some other books had been erased. Parchments of this character would of necessity be in quite a defaced condition, and the Bible written upon them would be almost inevitably filled with errors, or with words and letters which could not be easily deciphered. The name of GOD could not be written but with the greatest reverence, nor till the copyist had first washed his pen. The omission of a single letter or the redundancy of a single letter, vitiated the entire manuscript, though it had cost years of hard labor. Every copy must be examined, and approved or rejected, within thirty days after it was completed. Some twelve hundred of these Hebrew manuscripts are still extant, and although they are not all entire, they *actually agree* upon every point of practical moment.¹⁴

Robert Dick Wilson, after devoting years of study to the subject, assured us that we need not have any doubt about any page of the Old Testament. He carefully documented the manner in which

the transmission of the Old Testament had been done with great precision, extending to the very names of men and places.

But if the RSV offers only a “probable reconstruction” of the Old Testament text, it fares even worse in the New Testament.

The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying.³⁶

Here is seen the same prejudice against the Majority Text as evidenced by W-H. We are to believe that the great translations of the Reformation era were based on a text “marred by mistakes” with 1,400 years worth of errors! We reject this view, believing that God’s Word is preserved in the great majority of Greek MSS, and that it is instead the minority of MSS, which disagree violently among themselves, that are “marred by mistakes.”

Oswald T. Allis addressed the question, “Is the Revised Standard Version a ‘Liberal’ Version?”

Unless the distinction between “conservative” and “higher critic” or “liberal” is to pass utterly into the discard, few if any will endeavor to maintain that this revision was prepared by a group of conservative scholars. Evidence to the contrary is too clear and too abundant. . . .

If by a “liberal” version is meant a version which represents a lax and “liberal” attitude to the question of the plenary, verbal inspiration and the divine authority of Scripture, then RSV is clearly such a version.³⁷

Though Allis agrees it might be possible for a translation not to be marred by the liberal views of the translators (I do not agree;

a man's theology cannot help but dictate his translation), he reveals the theological views of two of the translators.

. . . Doctor Moffatt. . . in discussing the difficulties which the translator faces in trying to make an accurate and idiomatic translation, made this significant statement; "But once the translator of the New Testament is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration, these difficulties cease to be so formidable."

. . . Doctor Cadbury tells us: "As they [the first Christian authors] wrote with neither grammatical precision nor absolute verbal consistency, he [the modern translator] is willing to deal somewhat less meticulously with the data of a simple style that was naturally not too particular about modes or expression or conscious of some of the subtleties which some later interpreters read into it."²⁴

These views are far from conservative. And their fruit is seen in such places as Matthew 1:16, where the RSV reads:

"And Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus is born, who is called Christ."

A footnote declares:

(Other ancient authorities read *Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, was the father of Jesus who is called Christ.*

What are these "ancient authorities"? How numerous are they? What is their credibility? The RSV leaves us to guess, but we already know the answer.

The Search for the Word of God

Consider Mark 1:1:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

A footnote helps "clear this up":

Other ancient authorities omit *the Son of God*.

A comparison of the RSV with other modern versions will prove that, indeed, Allis was right. It shares the same character with each of the others; it is corrupted in the same places; they are all based on the same erroneous textual theory of W-H.

New American Standard Bible

Most present day conservatives have little interest in the RV, ASV, or RSV, for they realize the modernistic bias of the translators. But two versions which have ostensibly been translated by conservatives and which are both widely promoted and used among conservatives, are the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version. Are these translations really different from their predecessors? Can the conservative, Bible-believing Christian trust them?

One can hardly help but be amused at the Preface to the NASB. The translators express a conviction

...That interest in the American Standard Version 1901 should be renewed and increased...the version of 1901...deserves and demands perpetuation. . .The American Standard Version of 1901 was fast disappearing from the scene. . . Recognizing a responsibility to

posterity. THE LOCKMAN FOUNDATION felt an urgency to rescue this noble achievement from an inevitable demise, to preserve it as a heritage for coming generations. . . .”

Clearly, the NASB is simply an updated edition of the ASV. The ASV, of course, was the American edition of the Revised Version of 1881-85, which issued forth from the newly constructed Greek text of W-H. The changes from the English edition in the American edition were minimal. Thus, in the NASB, we have an updated RV.

But isn't it interesting that, while the ASV “deserves and demands perpetuation,” it was “fast disappearing from the scene,” and needed the urgent efforts of a foundation willing to come to its “rescue”? A general rule in life is that those things which deserve perpetuation generally receive it. Witness, for instance, the King James Version! It is approaching four hundred years since this translation was first rendered, and no one has had to come to its rescue. It is not fast disappearing. In spite of concerted efforts, massive advertising campaigns, and the collective wisdom of scholars, it is still THE BIBLE! It is still the translation by which all other translations are judged. Let a new version come on the market, and with what Bible is it compared in an effort to show the public how worthy it is? Why, the KJV, of course! Why has this happened to the KJV? Because it “deserves and demands perpetuation,” and it has received it.

In considering the NASB, we can dispense with all discussion of text and translators, for the text is the same as that of W-H, for all intents and purposes, and the translating has already been done, in 1881. All that is left is the “updating” of the ASV to rescue it from its “inevitable demise.” What are the results of this effort? A simple comparison with the KJV will serve to demonstrate the

difference between this “modern” version (really the RV of 1881 dressed up in a new suit) and the Holy Bible that has been the standard for hundreds of years. These examples could, of course, be multiplied many times.

Isaiah 53:10

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.”—KJV

“But the LORD was pleased
To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering.”—NASB

Hosea 11:12

“Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.”—KJV

“Ephraim surrounds Me with lies,
And the house of Israel with deceit;
Judah is also unruly against God,
Even against the Holy one who is faithful.”—NASB

Matthew 12:6

“But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.”—KJV

“But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here.”—NASB

Matthew 12:42

"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—KJV

"Behold, something greater than Solomon is here."—NASB

Matthew 19:17

"And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good?"—KJV

"And He said to him, 'Why are you asking Me about what is good?' "—NASB

Mark 10:24

"And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"—KJV

"And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, 'Children how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!' "—NASB A footnote reads, "Later ms. insert: *for those who trust in wealth.*" The later MSS referred to are the great bulk of Greek MSS extant, the Majority Text. Are we really to reject the testimony of some 90% of the MSS to believe that Jesus said it is hard to be saved?

Mark 11:26

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."—KJV

The NASB omits this verse. A footnote reads, “Later mss. add vs. 26. . . .”

Mark 16:9-20

The KJV includes these verses without question.

The NASB includes them in brackets, with a footnote reading, “Some of the oldest mss. omit from verse 9 through 20.” The oldest MSS referred to are B and Aleph. But, as we have seen earlier, these MSS are exceedingly corrupt. However, B, when it comes to Mark 16:9-20, actually leaves blank space sufficient to insert the passage, the only blank space so left in the MSS! Thus, instead of testifying against the passage, it witnesses for it. Aleph alone is left, and it stands in the face of the thousands of Greek MSS which contain Mark 16:9-20.

Luke 2:33

“And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.”—KJV

“And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.”—NASB

Luke 11:2

“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”—KJV

“And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.’”—NASB

Luke 23:42

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—KJV

"And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!'" —NASB

Luke 24:40

"And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."—KJV

The NASB omits this verse. A footnote reads, "Some ms. add verse 40. . . ."

John 3:13

"And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."—KJV

"And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man."—NASB A footnote reads, "Later manuscripts add, *who is in heaven.*"

John 5:16

"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day."—KJV

"And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath."—NASB

The Search for the Word of God

John 6:33

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”—KJV

“For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”—NASB A footnote reads, “Or, *He who comes.*” If the translation can be “He who comes,” why isn’t it translated that way?

John 6:69

“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”—KJV

“And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”—NASB

John 7:53-8:11

The KJV includes this passage without question.

The NASB includes the passage in brackets. A footnote reads, “John 7:53-8:11 is not found in most of the old mss.” This is untrue. Out of 73 MSS in the British Museum, 61 have the passage. It is the witness of the Majority Text.

John 8:9

“And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.”—KJV

“And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one.”—NASB

John 9:4

"I must work the works of him that sent me."-KJV

"We must work the works of Him who sent me."-NASB

John 9:35

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"-KJV

"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"-NASB

John 10:30

"I and my Father are one."-KJV

"I and the Father are one."-NASB

Acts 9:5, 6

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."-KJV

"And he said, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.' "-NASB

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."-KJV

The Search for the Word of God

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”—NASB

I Corinthians 5:7

“For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:”—KJV

“For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”—NASB

I Corinthians 6:20

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”—KJV

“For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”—NASB

I Corinthians 11:24

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you”—KJV

“And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you’”—NASB A footnote reads, “Some ancient mss. read, *is broken*.”

II Corinthians 5:17

“Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—KJV

“The old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”—NASB

Galatians 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"-KJV

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."-NASB

Colossians 1:14

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."-KJV

"In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."-NASB

1 Timothy 3:16

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."-KJV

"And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh."-NASB A footnote reads, "Some later mss. read, God."

Revelation 6:17

"For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"-KJV

"For the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?"-NASB

So many examples of this type could be given. But it is clear that the NASB is a version of the same stripe as all other English translations since 1611. It is based on a faulty MS hypothesis which

never has been proven and never can be proven, basically that developed by W-H, and as such preserves for us the readings of the RV. Should it not be obvious that neither the RV nor the ASV “deserves and demands perpetuation”? Both have faded into oblivion. Though the present promotion is great, it is safe to say that the NASB will suffer the same fate. It will not be providentially preserved by God, for it deletes and calls into question many of His Holy Words.

New International Version

Our remarks here about the NIV will be brief, for we have discussed it in depth previously. (See chapters one and two.) It is, with the NASB, a version which is being highly promoted to and somewhat accepted by conservatives. The NIV, however, rests upon the same textual principles as the RV, ASV, RSV, and NASB. Its New Testament text is admittedly an “eclectic” one. We have already discussed eclecticism, but note van Bruggen:

Eclecticism is always a subjective matter and only creates new mixed texts. The criteria of eclecticism also contradict each other⁹⁷. Now that considerable agreement concerning the text exists in the broad stream of the text-tradition, there is no need to resort to eclecticism. Copies of a corrupt text-form in the 2nd century, accidentally saved, would then receive a place equal to that of copies from many other centuries which are generally accepted as faithful copies.⁴⁰

⁹⁷A reading which is preferable because of “the style and vocabulary of the author throughout the book” or because of “the immediate context” is on the other hand

often suspect as *lectio facilior*. When one takes into account the possibility that the scribe omits "material when he deemed to be (i) superfluous, (ii) harsh, or (iii) contrary to pious belief, liturgical usage, or ascetical practice" one often comes in conflict with the rule *lectio brevior potior*. . . . The criterion of the authenticity of the reading which can explain the origin of the other variants can not be applied objectively; when reading B via "transcriptional probability" can be described as derived from reading A, reading A can often via "redactional probability" be described as derived from reading B.

The translators of the NIV seem to recognize the apparent irony of one new translation after another coming onto the market, being widely touted, then fading into the background as the KJV continues in its revered position as *the* Bible. One can almost sense that they are hoping against hope when they say, "So from the flood of twentieth-century versions one may yet emerge as the accepted Bible for a majority of readers today."⁴¹

Time will tell. As the wise man said, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

Other Versions

Many other versions of the Bible could be discussed. Since 1611, some one hundred different translations have been offered to the people.

We have already spoken of Moffatt, who made his own translation and also participated in the RSV. He did not at all adhere to the Biblical teaching of the inspiration of Scripture. His New Testament was based upon a now discredited text, that of von Soden.

There is the Living Bible. But it is not a translation; it is a

paraphrase. Though Kenneth Taylor believes that “paraphrasing is often more accurate than a literal word-for-word rendition,”⁴² a paraphrase is really a commentary, rather than a translation. It is an effort to restate God’s thoughts in terms of man’s thoughts, which cannot be done. (See Isaiah 55:8, 9.) Taylor did not work directly with the Hebrew and Greek. Rather, the American Standard Version of 1901 was the basis for his paraphrase.⁴³ So, again, in the Living Bible we have the RV and ASV “up-dated” in today’s language. If the NASB is not successful in rescuing the ASV from its inevitable demise as a translation, the Living Bible will attempt to rescue it as a paraphrase!

The Amplified Bible, another production of The Lockman Foundation, rests upon the same texts as the other modern versions and will be found to call the same passages into question and to delete the same portions of God’s Holy Word. Particularly puzzling is the claim of the Amplified Bible to use italics to “point out certain familiar passages now recognized as not adequately supported by the original manuscripts.”⁴⁴ As just about anyone would appear to know, scholar or not, *we have no original manuscripts!* It does seem a bit presumptuous for the translators of this version to claim to know enough about MSS they have never seen to call portions of Scripture into question. A quick glance through a copy of this work will immediately reveal those portions the translators placed in italics because they are not “adequately supported by the original manuscripts.” (How adequate would the support of an original MS have to be?) Those who reject the theory of W-H believe, of course, that the text of the original MSS is preserved providentially in the Majority Text.

The New English Bible, another recent translation, had Dr. C. H. Dodd as its Vice-Chairman and Director, and he gave “outstanding leadership and guidance to the project, bringing to the work scholarship, sensitivity, and an ever watchful eye.” He

did this "from start to finish."⁴⁴ It may be of interest to know that Dr. Dodd, with his "ever watchful eye," has clearly revealed his stance on Biblical inspiration and authority. Here are his words:

It long ago became clear that in claiming for the Bible accuracy in matters of science and history its apologists had chosen a hopeless position to defend.

The harm that has been done to the general conscience by allowing the outworn morality of parts of the Old Testament to stand as authoritative declarations. . . .

The old dogmatic view of the Bible therefore is not only open to attack from the standpoint of science and historical criticism, but if taken seriously it becomes a danger to public morals.

The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible authority for all its parts (note II Timothy 3:16) the passage leaves open the question whether inspired Scripture is infallible; that it is profitable, no one would deny.

God is the Author, not of the Bible, but of the life in which the authors of the Bible partake, and of which they tell in such imperfect human words as they could command.

The words of the Epistle to the Romans carry just as much weight as we are prepared to allow to Paul as a religious teacher. . . .

re Isaiah 9:17 and 60:12 Any theory of the inspiration of the Bible which suggests we should recognize such utterances as authoritative for us stands condemned.

Inspiration does not carry inerrancy, nor is it inerrancy that gives authority. . . .

The sayings of Jesus. There are sayings (not many indeed) which either simply are not true, in their plain meaning, or are unacceptable to the conscience or reason of Christian people. . . .⁴⁵

Such a view of Scripture certainly would disqualify one from attempting to translate the great truths of the Word of God into any language.

Then, there are many “one man versions,” or those translations rendered by one individual. It is extremely doubtful that any one man would have sufficient wisdom, knowledge, understanding, spirituality, or discernment to adequately translate the Word of God accurately. We have already discussed Moffatt and Taylor. Then there is Phillips. Phillips’ views seem to be similar to those of C. H. Dodd, whose work he recommends. Phillips accepts the “Q” document theory of the origin of the Book of Matthew, and says, “Though we may not like it, there is in fact very little sublime simplicity or simple grandeur in the original Greek of the four Gospels.”⁴⁷

Another “one man version” is Today’s English Version, the work of Dr. Robert Bratcher. Famous (or should we say infamous) for its deletion of the blood of Christ and the substitution of the word “death,” the TEV has been given the official approval of the Catholic Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Richard Cushing. In a letter to Julius C. Taylor on July 16, 1970, Dr. Bratcher said, “. . . the New Testament scriptures were written to specific situations, at specific times, to specific groups or individuals and in response to some felt need.” According to *The Greenville News* of November 8, 1970, Bratcher said to a student, “If we build our faith wholly on the Bible, then we are building our faith on shifting sand. We must follow the facts or there is nothing to believe. We cannot literally follow Jesus, only go in his direction.”⁴⁸ Obviously, Dr. Bratcher’s view is not that of Biblically defined inspiration. If Scripture were written in response to a “felt need,” Holy men did not speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is easy to see why Bratcher would call a faith in the Word only “shifting sand.” With the textual theories of modern textual critics resulting in texts which

are as unstable as water, such a faith would indeed be shifting. The TEV, of course, follows the same school of thought in text construction as the other modern translations.

Many other versions could be mentioned. But it is enough to say that every translation of the Scriptures on the market today which has been rendered since 1611 is based on the same textual theories as the RV, and none of them provide a solid foundation upon which to base one's faith and trust.

¹Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 26.

²The "revivers" did not carry out the commission given by the southern half of the Church of England (the northern half refused to participate). They were to revise the KJV only where necessary. Instead, they followed the new Greek text of W-H and introduced tens of thousands of changes in the English rendering.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁵Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 179.

⁶Ibid., p. 297.

⁷Ibid., p. 296.

⁸Ibid., p. 265.

⁹Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 184-85.

¹¹Ibid., p. 308.

¹²Ibid., p. 185.

¹³Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 305-6.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 309.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 271-72.

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¹⁷Ibid., p. 287.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 287-88.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 288.

²⁰Ibid., p. 120.

²¹Ibid., p. 154.

²²Ibid., pp. 161-62.

²³Ibid., p. 291.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 281-82.

²⁵Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 91.

²⁶Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 291.

²⁷Ibid., p. 293.

²⁸Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 93.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Dorus Clarke, *The Revision of the English Version of the Bible* (Boston, MA: American Tract Society, 1874), p. 37.

³¹Fuller, *True or False?*, p. 93.

³²*Revised Standard Version*, p. iv.

³³Ibid., p. v.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Clarke, *Revision*, pp. 33-35.

³⁶*Revised Standard Version*, p. vii.

³⁷Oswald T. Allis, *Revision or New Translation?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publ. Co., 1948), p. 143.

³⁸Ibid., p. 144.

³⁹*New American Standard Bible*, p. vi., vii.

⁴⁰Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, p. 38.

⁴¹*The Story of The New International Version*, p. 6.

⁴²"The Story of 'The Living Bible,'" *Eternity* (April 1973), p. 65.

An Evaluation of the New Versions

"*Ibid.*, p. 74.

"*The Amplified Bible*, front matter.

"*The New English Bible*, p. vii.

"Quoted by E. L. Bynum in "The New English Bible Exposed," tract #202, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Lubbock, TX.

"J. B. Phillips, *The Gospels translated into Modern English* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1955), pp. vi, ix, 1.

"Donald T. Clarke, *Bible Version Manual* (Millersburg, PA: B.T.M. Publ., 1975), pp. 91, 95, 99.

Response And Rejoinder

The December, 1980 issue of *The Pentecostal Herald* carried an article of mine entitled, "Why I Use the King James Version." Included in the response was a lengthy treatise from an instructor in a Christian college. In this chapter, I will present his response to my article and my rejoinder. In the interest of not offending any institution or individual, I will use a fictitious name for the instructor. We will follow the format initiated by the instructor, i.e. my original article is divided into sections to which he responds one at a time. I will take the liberty of handling the rejoinder in the same manner.

The Article

Today you can take your pick. It almost seems as if anyone who has ever studied Hebrew or Greek decides his contribution to the world will be to offer yet another translation of the Holy Bible. Maybe it's not quite that bad, but really, the plethora of versions and paraphrases

is enough to make your head swim. Take a look the next time you visit a Christian book store: The Revised Version, The American Standard Version, The Revised Standard Version, The New American Standard, The Amplified Bible, Moffatt's translation, Lamsa's translation, The New International Version, Good News for Modern Man, the so-called Living Bible (which isn't a translation at all, but a paraphrase), and even the Cotton Patch Version!

Where is the Word of God to be found in all this heap of genuine leather covers, paperback varieties, bluejean backs and who knows what else?

I take my stand firmly and unequivocally on the side of the King James Version.

It is becoming increasingly popular for Bible-loving people, including Pentecostals, to turn to some of the more "up-to-date" translations, with some preachers even using them regularly in their preaching and teaching. This, I believe, is the proverbial foot in the door which, if left unchecked, will ultimately bring about the compromise of the doctrines and standards we have held dear. Indeed, it will produce a generation of people who are at a total loss to know what God actually said.

The limitations of this article will prevent us from discussing the vast quantity of material which is relevant to the issue at hand. However, at the end, I will suggest three books I believe every Christian who is concerned should read.

Briefly, now, I will set forth a very few of the reasons why I stand with the King James Version.

White's Response

At the very first, let me affirm your right to express your

preference for the King James Version. Although I do not make the same claim, I respect your right to do so and hope that I may exercise tolerance toward your conviction.

Segrates' Rejoinder

There is a vast difference between a preference and a conviction. My commitment to the KJV is based on the latter. I realize that has nothing to do with the merits of my argument, but I want to make my position clear.

White's Response

In fact, as a teacher of New Testament and Biblical Theology, I use the King James Version as the basic scriptural text in my classes inasmuch as it is the one most familiar to the average lay-person and student.

Segrates' Rejoinder

White takes the same position as do so many other instructors in "conservative" schools: He does not prefer the KJV, but he "uses" it because it is the most familiar translation. Herein is seen a basic fallacy: If, as White later suggests, the KJV has *added* to God's Word, it is corrupt and should be spurned. We cannot use false words which purport to be God's Words on the basis that they are "most familiar." Regardless of how familiar they may be, if they aren't the words of God, they are dangerous and are to be avoided at all costs. Toward the end of the article, White responds to my use of Revelation 22:19 thusly:

Revelation 22:18 has an equal charge about "adding unto these things." Thus, not only is it important that vital

areas of the text are not dropped, it is equally important that unauthorized areas are not included.

I fully agree. But I wonder if White has followed his thinking through to its logical conclusion. Does he know what areas are “unauthorized”? If he follows the theoretical reconstruction of textual transmission created by W-II, he probably thinks John 7:53-8:11 and Mark 16:9-20 are included in the “unauthorized” areas. Does he ever preach or teach from these texts, or make reference to them in any way as the Word of God? Since a person’s salvation is endangered by adding to or taking away from God’s Word (Revelation 22:18, 19), does he feel strongly enough about this to correct those he hears “erroneously” using these areas as God’s Word? Is he *sure* the KJV adds unauthorized “Scripture”? If he is, and he recognizes the dire consequences of adding to God’s Holy Word, how can he “use” the KJV as the “basic scriptural text” in his classes? There really is no middle ground here. Either the Word of God has been added to, or it hasn’t. Regardless of one’s position on this subject, he will recognize that, of all the translations on the market today, there are basically only two *types* of Bibles (see Chapter Three): the one translated from the Majority Text, which is a fuller text, and those translated from the Minority Text, which is a shorter text. One of these is wrong. Either the KJV has added, or the new versions have taken away. Whichever is the guilty culprit is a corrupt “Bible,” if God’s Word means anything when it warns of additions or deletions (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18, 19). Since White believes it is the KJV that is not the pure Word of God, it escapes me how he could use it at all! Does he point out to his students each of the nearly 6,000 places where the text underlying the KJV New Testament differs from that of the newer versions? If he does not, does he really believe it is such a terrible thing to *add* to God’s Word?

White's Response

The problem I confront with your article is not so much your claim as it is the method by which you support your claim. With all due respect to the writings of David Fuller (of which I have copies) and others who defend the King James Version and the Textus Receptus,¹ one is still forced to admit that such a position is at best a minority opinion rejected by the mass of conservative scholars as well as moderates and liberals.

¹Edward F. Hill [sic], *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956); James Jasper [sic] Ray, *God Only Wrote Only One Bible* [sic] (Junction City, OR: The Eye Opener Publishers, 1955); Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers, 1977); etc.

Segrates' Rejoinder

Is he saying he would have no problem if I simply claimed the KJV is the Word of God? Is the method used to support a claim more important than the claim itself? What is it about my method he doesn't like? Rather, it seems to me that the *real* issue is not the method I use, but those things I state as facts. Since White does not believe that my facts are accurate, he rejects my argument. But let's be clear about where the real problem is: It is not with my method, it is with what I believe to be true, as opposed to what White believes to be true.

While we're at it, let's give "all due respect" to the writings of David Fuller and others who defend the KJV. First, Fuller himself has done very little writing in his three books. He has edited the works of others. (The writing he has done is, of course, first class. But we should not pass off his efforts as the works of one man.) Who are some of these men and what is their background?

Dr. David Otis Fuller—a graduate of Wheaton Academy and College and Princeton Seminary, Dr. Fuller studied under some of the greatest scholars in America, including Casper Wistar Hodge, grandson of theologian Charles Hodge; Robert Dick Wilson, the brilliant student of the O.T. who knew and spoke forty-five languages and dialects; J. Gresham Machen, Greek scholar; and Cornelius Van Til, the philosopher. He pastored for some forty-five years and only recently stepped aside from the pastorate of the Wealthy Street Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Fuller helped found the Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Grand Rapids in 1941. He served as a trustee of Wheaton College for forty years. He has been on the Board of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism since 1930, and has published between fifteen and twenty books. One of these is *Treasury of Evangelical Writings*, first published by McGraw Hill. More recently, he has condensed and edited the works of many others in his three books: *Which Bible?*, *True or False?*, and *Counterfeit or Genuine?*

Dr. Jakob van Bruggen—called by D. A. Carson (associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) “the most erudite defender of the Byzantine tradition,” van Bruggen is Professor of New Testament at the Theological College of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands. He took his doctorate under Professor Dr. W. C. van Unnik and has written, among other things, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*.

Dr. Wilbur N. Pickering—having worked extensively in linguistics for the past twenty years, Pickering is

associated with the Wycliffe Bible Translators. He holds the B.A. in English Literature from Bryan College, the Th.M. in Greek Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary, and the M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Toronto. He is the author of *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Dr. Edward F. Hills—a graduate of both Yale and Harvard. Dr. Hills is the author of *The King James Version Defended*, among other books. He has also written the Introduction to The Sovereign Grace Book Club's reprint edition of John Burdon's *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S. Mark*.

Zane C. Hedges—professor of New Testament literature and exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary. Hedges has articles both in Fuller's *Which Bible* and the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. He is the co-editor of *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Dr. Robert Dick Wilson—as Professor of Semitic Philology in Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Wilson authored such works as *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* and *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* An astonishingly brilliant man, Wilson knew and was fluently conversant in forty-five languages. He devoted his life to the defense of the traditional text of the O.T.

Dr. Alfred Martin—currently Vice President of Moody Bible Institute. Dr. Martin is a graduate of Dallas

Theological Seminary, where his dissertation was entitled “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” An edited version of this work appears in Fuller’s *Which Bible*.

John W. Burgon—ranked by K. W. Clarke along with Tregelles and Scrivener as one of the “great contemporaries” with Tischendorf, Burgon spent most of his adult life at Oxford, where he was Fellow of Oriel College and vicar of St. Mary’s (the University Church) and Gresham Professor of Divinity. Among other things, he wrote *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* and *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text*.

Dr. Henry M. Morris—currently Director of the Institute for Creation Research and Professor of Apologetics at Christian Heritage College, Dr. Morris is a graduate of the University of Minnesota. He has written many books on Christian evidences and the scientific accuracy of the Bible. In one of them, *The Bible has the Answer*, Morris takes a firm stand with the KJV and the Majority Text (pp. 11-13).

Jasper James Ray—a missionary and Bible teacher, Ray has caused many to see how important it is that we know which version is the Word of God. He has done this through his little book, *God Wrote Only One Bible*, and through various other publications.

Now that we have given some of those who support the Majority Text and the resultant KJV a bit of the respect they are due, I must point out that many, many more scholars could be

marshalled on the side of the W-H theory. My purpose in spending time with these is not in any way to try to give the impression that it is the view of the majority. We do need to know, however, that those defending the view set forth in my article are not ignorant men, blissfully going on in superstitious reverence for an outdated translation of the Bible. They are, rather, men equally as learned, scholarly, and capable as others, but who, having heard the arguments in favor of the textual theory of W-H, have rejected them.

White says he has copies of David Fuller's books. But in light of some of his arguments later in his response, I am caused to wonder if he has read them as carefully as he has the works of Greenlee, Bruce, and others.

Next, I would like to say that I am not "forced" to "admit" that my position is that of the minority. I cheerfully state that mine is the minority view. But I fail to see that this has anything whatever to do with the issue at hand. It is a known fact of history that the minority is often right and the majority wrong. The weight of "scholarship" has absolutely no bearing on the rightness or wrongness of an argument. If so, Darwin's theory of evolution is correct. Since I know that the theological heritage in which White was reared and the doctrinal stance of the school at which he taught are certainly minority views on today's theological scene (as are mine), I must admit to being somewhat surprised that he would appeal to such an argument. The numerical weight on either side of an issue is of no consequence.

White says that my view is "rejected by the mass of conservative scholars as well as moderates and liberals." What does he mean by *conservative*? (Emphasis his.) Since he quotes from them, would he class Greenlee and Bruce as conservative? Does he agree with Greenlee that God's Holy Word is no more providentially preserved than children's fairy stories or Mother Goose rhymes? Does he think Greenlee is correct when he says, "No ms. or text-

type is perfectly trustworthy”?² It is impossible for me to believe that the Biblical doctrines of inspiration and preservation give room for such notions.

I suppose we could identify the word “conservative” to mean whatever we want it to, but to me, it seems that it should be a word applied to those who believe the Biblical view of the inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. According to my definition, then, Greenlee would not be a conservative. Neither would Bruce. The latter says,

. . . All speech is reported in direct form, whether the words recorded were the actual words spoken or represent the general purport of what was said.³

Bruce is here dealing with the subject of “Biblical Hebrew.” His suggestion that the Old Testament may contain, not the actual words spoken, but the “general purport” of them, is not, in my definition, a conservative view. It accords with the rationalistic idea that God inspired ideas, concepts, or thoughts, but not words. The Scripture clearly teaches, however, that the Holy Bible is God’s *Word*. Some 2,500 times, the Scripture says, “Thus saith the LORD,” “and God said,” and similar phrases. Do we actually have the words of God, or the “general purport” of what He said? Bruce believes the latter; I agree with the former.

Does White agree with Bruce that the record of the sun and moon standing still in Joshua 10:12 f. is a “piece of poetry”?⁴ Would he concur that the four Gospels came about from a combination of oral tradition and various other sources?⁵ Does he agree with Bruce on the “Q” document theory for Matthew and Luke?⁶ Does he think that Jesus spoke in poetry so that His disciples could more easily memorize His words?⁷

I am, of course, at a loss to know whether White would agree

with Bruce on these, and other positions taken by the latter. But there is at least one area of disagreement between the two. First, Bruce:

...Early Christians were careful to distinguish between sayings of Jesus and their own inferences or judgments. Paul, for example, when discussing the vexed questions of marriage and divorce in I Cor. vii., is careful to make this distinction: "I, not the Lord," and again, "Not I, but the Lord."¹⁰

Now, White:

If the Bible is Totally Inspired, How Do Scriptures Such as I Cor. 7:10-12 Fit Into That Fact? Paul declares in verse 10 "...I command, yet not I, but the Lord...." In verse 12, however, he declares, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord...." Was Paul inspired in some statements while simply venturing his opinion in others? Certainly not! In verse 10 it must be noted that Paul was quoting Jesus' words and teachings recorded in Matthew 5:31-32; 19:5-9. However, in verse 12, he was not quoting from the words of Christ but was speaking from the sole standpoint of divine revelation and inspiration. In I Corinthians 14:37, Paul directly declared, "...The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."¹¹

So Bruce (is he a conservative?) believes that certain portions of Paul's letters are not the Word of God. White believes, or at least has believed,¹² that the same words are the words of God. Surely this is a significant area of consideration, and it should prompt White to reconsider the other views of Bruce, including his endorsement of the W-H textual theory.

My personal definition of the word “conservative” would not allow me to place in that category Bruce, Greenlee, or any other scholar who adheres to the W-H theory. At the same time, I realize others will have different definitions of the word. But, while the “mass of *conservative* scholars” may reject the Majority Text and the KJV, there are *some* conservative scholars who accept both. On the other hand, I don’t believe you will find even one “moderate” or “liberal” who accepts the thesis I uphold. As far as I am concerned, this is a *plus* factor for the Majority Text and the KJV. I understand that nothing is proved by what the liberals and moderates reject or accept, but you will generally find them on the *wrong* side of the issue, as far as Biblical matters are concerned! So, I am not troubled or moved by the fact that mine is a minority opinion. I do not sorrow that I am on the opposite side of the fence from the liberals and moderates. As for the “mass of conservatives,” many of those in that “mass” are not conservatives at all. But whether they are true conservatives or not, truth in Biblical matters is not decided by a majority vote of human beings.

White’s Response

Granted, some versions are better than others and a few are markedly inferior.

Segraves’ Rejoinder

So White is willing to grant that some versions are better than others. Which ones are they? Which are those that are “markedly inferior”? If he still holds the same view as put forth in the article from which we have already quoted, White believes that Moffatt’s, Weymouth’s, Phillips’, Rotherham’s, Goodspeed’s, the Revised Standard Version, and the Twentieth Century New Testament are among the “fine versions.” Somewhat surprisingly, in view of his belief

that the KJV has added unauthorized areas to God's Word, he includes the King James Version in the above list. If these are the "fine versions," which are those that are "markedly inferior"? How can Moffatt's and the KJV both be "fine," when they are based on two totally different texts? What is the deciding factor as to whether a translation is "fine" or "inferior," if it is not the underlying text? Are the above translations "fine" because they are based on current textual criticism? Then the KJV cannot be "fine." I am astounded to see the KJV included in a list with Moffatt, et al. These Bibles are as different as night and day. As we have seen previously in this study, the Greek text upon which the New Testament of the new versions is based differs nearly 6,000 times from that of the KJV. We have previously dealt specifically with Moffatt, Phillips, and the RSV. I do not believe that anybody's definition of "conservative" would be broad enough to include those responsible for translating the versions White lists as "fine," except for the KJV.

I agree with White that "some versions are better than others." Among these I would include the KJV and Tyndale. But I would have to say that *many*, not a few, are markedly inferior. In that category I would place all of those based on the inferior textual theory of W-H, which includes some one hundred translations rendered since 1611.

White's Response

At the same time, to categorize all other versions but the King James Version in one low level worthy of rejection is certainly less than objective.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I do not categorize "all other versions...in one low level." As

mentioned above, there are a few other translations which would reach toward the high standard of the KJV, Tyndale being one of them. (The KJV, of course, retains much of Tyndale's translation. The KJV is the crowning fruit of a series of translations rendered during the Reformation era.) I do not think it is "less than objective" to "categorize all other versions." Indeed, it is not I who categorized them; they categorized themselves by being based upon practically identical texts. Whether we like it or not, there are only two categories of Bibles in the world today. The one category is represented by the KJV (the Majority Text); the other category is represented by the versions rendered since the KJV (the critical text created by W-H). I am unable to see how any person could accept both. In my view, one category must be rejected and the other accepted. I cannot see how we can do any other, if the Bible means anything at all by its warnings not to add to or take from God's Holy Word. *One category must be wrong!* Either the KJV is corrupt in some 6,000 places in the New Testament alone, or it is the newer versions that are corrupt. We cannot have it both ways. To me, the *only* objective decision possible is to reject the one and cling to the other. I do not see how White can cling to both.

White's Response

A false dilemma emerges in such an approach which is unfortunate, that is, the "slip or slide argument" that if the King James Version is lost everything is liable to fall. If indeed a version other than the King James Version automatically opens the door to a loss of doctrinal distinctives, how can one hope to overcome the resulting problems?

Segraves' Rejoinder

White suggests that I have created a "false dilemma." What

I said was this, concerning the increasing use of modern translations by Bible-loving people:

This, I believe, is the proverbial foot in the door which, if left unchecked, will ultimately bring about the compromise of the doctrines and standards we have held dear.

I do not believe this is a false dilemma. I believe it accurately represents the facts of the case as they have occurred among many once conservative Christian colleges and movements. There is no denying the fact that many such institutions and movements which once had strong doctrinal distinctives and standards are mere shadows of what they once were. Is it a coincidence that they have also laid aside their KJV in favor of modern versions? The only question up for debate here is whether the loss of the KJV had anything to do with the loss of standards and doctrinal distinctives. I believe the two are related. There is a certain irreverence for the Word of God that seems to accompany the rejection of the KJV. We hear the tired old joke about a little old lady who said, "If the KJV was good enough for the Apostle Paul, it's good enough for me!" We hear Scriptures read from the KJV, and some pundit follows with, "Would you please say that in English?"

When a person begins "slipping" and "sliding" down this path (to use White's words), they are never content to take the words of the KJV at face value on matters of standards and doctrines. Invariably, they want to check it out with Moffatt, Lamsa, the RSV, or some other modern version. Their affections are divided, and they have more than one authority. If the KJV crosses their grain, maybe another translation will say it in a different way, or—better yet—leave the verse out altogether. Divided authority is the basis for rebellion.

Now the second sentence in White's last response needs further

consideration. *He* is the one who is about to create a false dilemma. I did not say that a version other than the KJV automatically opens the door to a loss of doctrinal distinctives. Only the translations based on the newly created text of W-H and their offspring open the door to this kind of loss. Remember: The basic issue, even before translations, is *text*. Many Bibles before the KJV were translated from the same text as the KJV. No one ever lost their standards or doctrinal distinctives by using any one of them; but standards and doctrinal distinctives have been lost by those using modern versions.

White's Response

The earliest versions in church history were translated other than from the Received Text since, of course, it did not as yet exist.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I suppose when White says “Received Text,” he is referring to that specific text printed by the Elzevir Brothers which they called the “Textus Receptus,” or Received Text. In that sense, obviously, the Received Text did not exist at the time the earliest versions in church history were made. But this is beside the point. The fact is, *the textual tradition represented by the Received Text DID exist when the earliest versions were made*. White will, naturally, say it did not. So will the scholars he quotes. But Pickering, van Bruggen, Hills, Burgon, and others disagree. This is the whole issue: What was the form of the text at the first? White will say the current texts of Nestle-Aland, UBSGNT, W-H, and others are closer to the original; I believe the Majority Text, represented by some 90% of the extant MSS, and as seen in the Textus Receptus, is closest to the original. To see my reasoning, one would need to read the preceding chapters.

White's Response

Certain texts became popular in a variety of widespread geographical locations. Thus, one would have to say that any other text other than that of the Byzantine family (from which the Received Text and the King James Version were basically derived) was insufficient and that large groups of early Christians were categorically deficient in their theology.

Sogrates' Rejoinder

It is by no means unanimously agreed, even by adherents to modern theories of textual criticism, that "certain texts became popular in a variety of widespread geographical locations." At one time, this was believed, but the facts are changing this consensus. For instance, Milne and Skeat, of the British Museum, say,

. . . In recent years it has been growing steadily clearer that the old idea of a variety of local texts, each confined to a particular area, is mistaken. Nowhere, indeed, is this more obvious than in Egypt itself, where we find a number of radically different texts circulating side by side.¹¹

White speaks of the Byzantine "family." Van Bruggen says,

. . . It is better to describe the Byzantine textual tradition as a collection of converging textual traditions than as a varying reproduction of one archetype. . . one can not simply reduce the large majority of the manuscripts to one vote and then only a secondary vote. . . it is impossible to treat the majority of the manuscripts during the evaluation of them as though they textually formed one family.¹²

Van Bruggen also addresses the issue of the theory of “certain texts” becoming “popular in a variety of widespread geographical areas.”

. . . That the finds are incidental and restricted to certain areas, prevents us from generalizing about *the New Testament text* in the first centuries on the ground of this material. It is not even possible to generalize about *the Egyptian text* of those days on the basis of this material.¹³

Is the Byzantine (i.e. Received Text) a late text which was not available for the early versions?

There certainly were majuscules [uncial, or capital letter MS] just as venerable and ancient as the surviving *Vaticanus* or *Sinaiticus*, which, like a section of the *Alexandrinus*, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script¹⁴ and their majuscule-appearance has vanished. . . . The papyri have shown clearly that readings which do not occur in the older majuscules and therefore were called late and Byzantine, do occur in the 2nd and 3rd century: . . . According to the theory of Hort the number of “Byzantine” readings would become less the further we go back into the past. Yet it seems to be increasing! . . . In an unexpected area (Egypt!) the “Byzantine” readings do not decrease, but increase, the deeper we penetrate into the first centuries. If the modern scholarship of the New Testament textual criticism did not have that prejudice against the Byzantine text, then there would be every reason to hypothesize a gradual “de-byzantinizing” of the text, which resulted in the text-type of the older surviving majuscules, and which was reversed in the remainder of the textual tradition.¹⁵

For further discussion of text-types, please see page 44.

Concerning, now, the second sentence in the portion of White's response we have last quoted: ". . . One would have to say that any text other than that of the Byzantine family. . . was insufficient. . . ." Is White claiming that *any* one of the various texts which he says were in circulation was sufficient? Is he suggesting that it makes little difference which text one uses? If so, has he thought through the implications of such a position? If it makes no difference which text-type is used, then it is not essential for man to live by "every word of God" (Luke 4:4). (Of course, the modern Greek texts delete this portion of Scripture.) White seems to be suggesting that as long as a person has a text that contains *some* of God's Word, that is sufficient. This is contrary to Scripture. If large groups of early Christians were without every Word of God, then their Bibles were without question insufficient and they were "deficient in their theology." But the evidence points to the fact that all through the history of the church, the majority of believers have used the text reflected today in the KJV.

But here is another aspect of White's argument which I doubt he has considered: If the Byzantine text is inferior, virtually *all* Christians for 1,500 years were "categorically deficient in their theology," for they held as the Word of God texts which "conflated," "added to," and "smoothed out" to produce a fuller text!

White's Response

The translations of the New Testament into languages other than English automatically become inferior, for in most cases, they are not made from the Received Text.

Segraves' Rejoinder

This has nothing to do with the truth or error of the subject

at hand. If no other Bible but the English version were ever translated from the Received Text, it would prove nothing either way. But the fact is that the Received Text has been translated in many, many of the languages of the world. It has been estimated that there have been as many as 886 translations made which reflect the Received Text.¹⁶

White's Response

The work of such people as the Wycliffe Translators, which has been such a boon to many of our own missionaries, becomes a liability since it will produce "a generation of people who are at a loss to know what God actually said."

Segraves' Rejonder

Again, this is beside the point. The question is not dedication of translators or the quality of their work. The real question is: Which text represents the actual Word of God, without additions or deletions? But the statement does cause me to again ask if White has actually read the work of men like Pickering. Pickering is himself associated with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and has done much of his work among the Apurina tribe in Brazil, the country where he was born!

And, indeed, I must repeat: If the text from which a translation is made does not represent the pure Word of God, there is no way that the translation can do so. If the text leaves out, so will the translation; if the text adds to, the translation will do the same. No appeal to sentimentality will change that fact. If the text is not the Word of God, those who have only a translation from that text will in fact be at a loss to know what God actually said.

White's Response

Paul and other New Testament writers become problematic. They quote from the Septuagint of the Intertestamental Period. It is a well known fact that the Hebrew text differs from the Greek Septuagint in a variety of ways. Must we accuse Paul of duplicity?

Segraces' Rejoinder

White states as a fact a view that is accepted by many as truth, but that has not been, and never can be, proven. It is the thought that New Testament writers quote from the Septuagint. I will certainly admit that the evidence can be interpreted this way, but it can also be interpreted otherwise. This is another case where one's viewpoint determines the way he sifts data.

Sidney Collett offers an alternative view:

It is a fact that many of the quotations in the New Testament differ somewhat from their originals in the Old. Are we, therefore, to conclude that God does not trouble about the words of His message? or are we to say that the men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost made mistakes? I know not.

It may be interesting and instructive to the reader to know that, out of about 263 direct quotations from the Old Testament, Horne says 88 are verbal quotations from the Septuagint; 64 are borrowed from it; 37 have the same meaning but different words; 16 agree more nearly with the Hebrew; and 20 differ from both the original Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint.

Now these figures of Horne's clearly show that, as a matter of fact, the apostles in writing the epistles, etc., did

not make use of the Septuagint translation; otherwise, all their quotations would naturally have agreed with it. The truth is they wrote their epistles in Greek, and therefore must have understood that language well; while, being Jews, they would also have been perfectly familiar with the Hebrew language. . . .

It is probable, therefore, that in making their quotations from the Old Testament they would translate direct from the Hebrew, adopting in each case such Greek expressions as the Holy Spirit guided them to use. This being so, it is natural to find that in some cases the Septuagint version happens to agree with what the apostles wrote, while in other cases the Septuagint, not being an inspired work, would differ somewhat from the apostles' translations. In each case, however, the quotations as written by the apostles are as divinely inspired as the originals from which they are taken, although they may not be, as indeed they are not, mere repetitions of the exact Hebrew words.

It should ever be borne in mind that none but *the Holy Ghost knows the exact and full meaning of His own words*, as recorded in the Old Testament, and only He can infallibly reproduce His message in other words.

And surely *He has a perfect right to do this*, without our finding fault or charging Him with carelessness. But, further, may not there be *a special design in these very differences*—viz. that, by giving us an old truth in new words, we might be able to see some new and deeper teaching, which really lay hidden in the old, but which we never should have seen had it not been given us in a different form? . . .

. . . Seeing that the writers of the New Testament were

themselves Jews, it is not too much to say that, in quoting Old Testament passages, had they been left to themselves they would have copied the originals with the greatest care, and would not have dared to alter a single letter. But the truth is, these things were not done "by the will of man" (2 Pet. 1:21); and so, in spite of the fact that in many cases the writers must have known that they were not giving the exact words of the old familiar text, nevertheless, being "moved"—or borne along—by the mighty influence of the Holy Ghost, they had to write the words which God gave them. And we may imagine with what fear and trembling they must at times have perused their own writings, seeing those differences, and yet never daring to lift a pen to alter one of them.¹⁷

This view, to me, seems manifestly more reasonable and sensible than that which would have the writers of the inspired New Testament quoting from an uninspired translation of the Old Testament. What could possibly be the purpose of going through a translation of Old Testament Scripture, when they had access to the original tongue?

But Hills offers another view:

When one studies the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, one is struck by the inspired wisdom which the Apostles exhibited in their attitude toward the Septuagint. On the one hand, they did not invariably set this version aside and make new translations from the Hebrew. . . . But on the other hand, the Apostles did not quote from the Septuagint invariably and thus encourage the notion that this Greek translation was equal to the Hebrew Old Testament in authority. Instead, they walked

the middle way between these two extremes. Sometimes they cited the Septuagint verbatim, even when it departed from the Hebrew in non-essential ways, and sometimes they made their own translation directly from the Hebrew or used their knowledge of Hebrew to improve the rendering of the Septuagint.¹⁸

If Collett's view is correct, and I believe it is, Dr. Hill's explanation is seen to be no contradiction of it. Hills, obviously, believes that the New Testament writers did sometimes use the LXX, but Collett's theory would explain that apparent use.

Legend has it that the Septuagint (LXX) was translated from Hebrew into Greek by the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus for his library in Alexandria. This supposedly occurred about 250 B.C. But there are no completely trustworthy historical records upon which to base this story. No fragments of the LXX are extant dating B.C. It is interesting, then, to note that still another view of the LXX is put forth.

One of the most intriguing theories is that of the late Professor Paul Kahle, a renowned Semitics scholar (1875-1964), who argued that there never was any LXX, at least until Christian times, and that our *Letter of Aristeas* is propaganda for a revision of the Greek Bible which was made in Alexandria. Kahle claimed that there were no "official" translation undertakings in Judaism such as *Aristeas* suggests, but rather a number of local attempts. . . .¹⁹

I fully realize that this is currently a radical theory, but it is also true that the current explanation of the LXX is based upon the so-called *Letter of Aristeas* alone, without one shred of solid historical evidence. If the LXX was a Greek translation done after

the time of Christ, by whomever and for whatever reason, it would be perfectly understandable why some references would agree with apostolic writings. We could thus have a case of the apostolic writers being copied, rather than doing the copying.

At any rate, the background of the LXX is far too shadowy to make it a part of the issue at hand. If it were a pre-Christian work, Collett's explanation is perfectly reasonable and in accord with the Scripture. I do not see any other view that does fully square with Scripture. And, no, we must not accuse Paul of duplicity.

White's Response

Can there be only "one" correct translation which accurately conveys the thoughts of the originals?

Segrates' Rejoinder

I hope not, but it seems White is slipping into rationalism, i.e. the idea that God inspired the *thoughts* of Scripture but not the words. How does one go about translating thoughts? Is Kenneth Taylor right when he says, "Paraphrasing is often more accurate than a literal word-for-word rendition"? Is he correct to say, "A more literal translation may be 'accurate' on the word-for-word level while actually being misleading, obscure or just plain inaccurate as far as the original sense of the passage is concerned"? Does the Bible ever say, "And God thought" or, "The thoughts of the Lord came unto me, thinking. . . ." No, God spoke in words. And for us to have the Word of God in our language, we must have a translation that directly renders God's words into the immediate equivalent of our words. I have not said that there could be only "one" translation which could be correct. *That is not at all the point of my article.* But one can only be correct which is translated

from the *correct text!* As we have said previously, the KJV and Tyndale are both correct; but they are both translated from the Majority Text. The first thing that makes a translation right or wrong is the *text*.

White's Response

Aramaisms in the New Testament are translated into Greek by the New Testament writers and then retranslated again into English by modern translators. In any such transmission, we must allow for variation.

Segraves' Rejoinder

White does not mention which specific Aramaisms he has in mind, so I will point out that he is speaking of words like "Maranatha" (I Corinthians 16:22) and "Talitha cumi" (Mark 5:41). I fail to see that this has any bearing on the subject at hand, for whatever the New Testament writers were inspired of the Holy Ghost to do, we may be sure it was infallibly correct. There is no need to "allow for variation" on their part.

White's Response

No one can deny that the work of translation is not simply a matter of substituting words of one language for another. There are problems of syntax, grammar, context, idiom, and so forth that render absurd the idea that scholarly study must come to an abrupt halt at some precise point in history (such as 1611).

Segraves' Rejoinder

For once, White and I find ourselves in complete agreement.

I certainly never suggested that "scholarly study must come to an abrupt halt." But the sad problem is that the textual theory of W-H, and the resultant textual criticism of our day, is unscholarly. It is based on a theory which is not, and cannot be, proven. (See Chapter Two.) I am all for the advance of scholarship, but I am not in favor of tossing the KJV aside in favor of translations based upon primarily two corrupt MSS.

White's Response

There are a few difficulties to be encountered when one sees the King James Version as the only valid version.

Segrates' Rejoinder

So far, I have seen no difficulties in the view that the Majority Text is that which preserves for us God's Word in the Greek language. As for the latter part of the sentence above, I do not see the KJV as the *only* valid version, as I have already pointed out. There were versions before the KJV which were perfectly valid, and the Majority Text has been translated into hundreds of other languages. Those translations are valid. But I do not see as valid any translation based upon a text lacking in validity.

White's Response

One gains the impression from the article that the King James Version is not only to be considered superior, but to be held as a divinely-inspired translation as well. If such be the case, then we have included the scholars of 1611 in the same category as the New Testament writers themselves, and this would be most unfortunate!

Segraves' Rejoinder

White sets up a straw man and then knocks him down. I have *not* suggested that the KJV is “divinely-inspired.” But I *do* believe that God did not inspire His words in the original autographs to consign them thereafter to their fate at the hands of fallible men. Instead, I believe that God continually intervened to preserve His Word for all generations. I *do* believe that He, in His sovereignty, exercised a gracious influence over the translators of 1611. The fruit of that version, I believe, proves it. But that is quite another thing from saying they were “divinely-inspired.” Would White suggest that God has *nothing* to do with the translation of His Word? Is God totally uninvolved with that process?

God’s influence upon those who, in humility and with right motives, attempt to translate His Holy Word as found in the Majority Text, is quite a different thing than His influence or lack of it over unbelieving translators who are working with inferior MSS.

Gustavus Paine certainly did not believe the translators of the KJV were inspired, but even he had to marvel at the product of their labors.

But hard work alone, singly or in groups, does not insure a great result. Were the learned men saints, under direct inspiration? . . .

Are we to say that God walked with them in their gardens? Insofar as they believed in their own calling and election, they must have believed that they would have God’s help in their task. We marvel that they could both submerge themselves and assert themselves, could meekly agree yet firmly declare, and hold to the words they preferred as just and fitting. At the same time they could write and they could listen, speak clearly, and hearken to the

sounds they tested, as well as to the voice of what they deemed the divine Author. And that must have been the secret of their grace and their assurance: they agreed, not with other men like themselves, but with God as their guide, and they followed not as thinking themselves righteous but as led by a righteousness beyond them. They knew that human beings are but worms, but that man when he is good and docile may mount up with wings as eagles, to be the child of God.²¹

White's Response

It might be added that modern translators as well as the King James translators have taken a very high view of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture as may be attested by the following quote from the Translator's Preface of the New International Version:

...The translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They believe that it contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, that it sheds unique light on our path in a dark world, and that it sets forth the way to our eternal well-being.

The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers.

Segraves' Rejoinder

By far, the majority of modern translators from the RV of 1881 to this time do not take the high view of the "authority and sufficiency of Scripture" that the translators of the KJV took. That there

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are *some* who do, I readily agree. But they are few and far between. But it does little good to take the highest view of Scripture possible if the text from which one is translating does not contain the pure Word of God. And, as we have seen previously, the NIV is based upon an eclectic text in the New Testament, which amounts to saying that the translators created their own text as they went along. This they did from the texts currently on the market (Nestle-Aland, UBSGNT, etc.), all of which follow the textual theories of W-H.

The Article

I. It is based upon the finest ancient manuscripts.

The hoopla for practically every version since the Revised Version has included the suggestion that it is translated from manuscripts more ancient than those available to the committee which worked under the authorization of King James. (Yes, that's right, even your Thompson Chain Reference Bible, under number 4220, claims the Revised Version "has one distinct advantage over all its predecessors. It reaches down and touches the most ancient copies of the original Scriptures.")

White's Response

Probably the most detracting factor from this defense of the King James Version is the penchant for allusion and innuendo which tends to cast a shadow on the opposition without actually dealing in any substantial facts. The word "hoopla," for instance, as used to refer to the claim of great antiquity for the manuscripts behind the modern versions (since 1881), seems intended to denigrate the claim, even before the facts are examined. Although the con-

ession is made that such a claim exists, it is given as only a "suggestion" which in turn leaves open to the reader that such a suggestion might be erroneous [sic]. Let it here be acknowledged: the claim that the modern versions are based on older manuscripts than were available to the King James Version translators is not just a suggestion. It is indisputable fact and has been attested by virtually every major textual scholar for the past century.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I will quickly admit that it would have been better had I said "fact" than "suggestion." Indeed, it is a fact that the new versions are based on older MSS than those available to the committee of the KJV, specifically B and Aleph. But this has nothing to do with the argument at hand; both White and I agree that the MSS are older. All textual scholars that I know of agree to the same thing. But the point of disagreement comes when we ask, "Is older necessarily better?" For a full discussion of this question, I refer the reader to pages 71 through 73, as well as other portions of this work.

White's Response

In all fairness, the fact that a manuscript is older does not in every case indicate that it is better (i.e. if a later manuscript has evidence that it was copied from a very accurate but no longer existing earlier manuscript that is older but demonstrably inferior).

Segraves' Response

I am in complete agreement with the first part of White's statement above, but I am not sure I understand the last part. It seems

to me the typist may have made a mistake, and that he intended to say something like, “(i.e., if a later manuscript has evidence that it was copied from a very accurate but no longer existing earlier manuscript that is older and demonstrably superior).” In any case, I think he means that a later MS can be more accurate than one predating it, if the later MS was copied faithfully from an accurate exemplar which predates the other MS. This is precisely what the defenders of the Majority Text believe! B and Aleph are demonstrably corrupt, as we have already shown. That they are older, no one denies. But every MS in the Byzantine tradition was copied from an earlier MS; no one can say for certainty the date of the exemplar represented by any extant minuscule. In the ninth century, a great effort was made to copy existing uncials as minuscules, after which, according to both the Jewish and Christian tradition, the uncial exemplars were destroyed. (We have dealt with this earlier.) Thus, while the Byzantine MSS are of later date than B and Aleph, no one can authoritatively say they are of later *origin*. Van Bruggen says, “What reason do we still have to state that other Byzantine readings are not old: it has now been proven that what we today consider ‘young’ can tomorrow be shown to be ‘old’.”²²

White's Response

However, in any such case, the burden of proof is upon those who support the priority of the later manuscript.

Segraves' Rejoinder

And the proof is that the vast majority of extant MSS reflect the same text. In any normal process of textual transmission, this should prove that it is the earliest text.²³ But, in addition to this,

the Byzantine text is supported by the majority of the early translations, church fathers, and lectionaries. This has been amply demonstrated by Burgon and others.

The Article

What the esteemed scholars (including Drs. Westcott and Hort) have forgotten (or neglected) to tell us, however, is that the "most ancient copies" (specifically the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*) are demonstrably among the most corrupt in existence!

White's Response

A certain lack of taste is evident in the suggestion that "esteemed scholars (including Drs. Westcott and Hort) have forgotten (or neglected) to tell us" all the facts. Even their scholarly opponents, Drs. Scrivener and Burgon, did not attack along these lines! Such statements suggest that esteemed scholars in general and Westcott and Hort in particular are deceptive. Yet, however much one may disagree with the textual critical praxis of Westcott and Hort, however much one may prefer the assimilated text of Erasmus (and it is the right of anyone to do so if he wishes), the integrity and scholarship of these men cannot in good conscience be impinged upon. There is no question among either those for them or against them that they were less than at the very top of their field and straightforwardly ethical in their scholarship. Prevailing opinion among scholars over the past one hundred years has confirmed rather than lessened that high opinion.

Segrates' Rejoinder

I cheerfully admit that it is possible I showed a certain "lack

of taste" in the above portion of the article. Were I rewriting it, I would say something like this:

What Westcott and Hort failed to call to the attention of the public is that the Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are demonstrably among the most corrupt in existence!

My lack of taste has no bearing on the validity of my argument.

White's Response

The last statement in this section must bear some close scrutiny! Only a textual expert is in a position to decide what is or is not a corrupt text, and even then it is often a difficult business. (When we speak of a "corrupt text" in a technical sense, we refer to a text which varies from the manuscript from which it was copied or which varies from the autograph itself.) Inasmuch as we do not even have a single autograph (original manuscript penned by the biblical writer himself), it is far from easy to determine the extent of corruption within an individual manuscript. True, the variant readings between the different manuscripts is evidence that there is textual corruption, but to pick any two manuscripts which are variant and arbitrarily designate one as corrupt and the other as pure is just so much guesswork. In fact, that is what the science of textual criticism is all about in the first place—the comparison of variant readings so as to decide which is closest to the autograph. Thus, to say that the Codexes Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are among the most corrupt in existence without a footnote as to even one scholarly source is particularly unconvincing, especially in light of the fact that the scholarly world as a whole appraises them as being among the most valuable.

Segrars' Rejoinder

I certainly do not claim to be a textual expert. But one need not be in order to read the results of the researches of those who are. The basis for my statement that B and Aleph are among the most corrupt in existence is not primarily their lack of agreement with the vast majority of extant MSS, nor even their violent disagreement with one another. Instead, it is their plain and simple corruption at the hand of a careless or ignorant scribe. It is not I who make this accusation. On pages 103 through 109 of this dissertation, one may read the description of B and Aleph as offered by the keepers of the British Museum where Aleph resides, and by brilliant textual scholars who have examined the MSS. Even Tischendorf, who discovered Aleph, admits to 14,800 places where some alteration has been made in the text of that MS! The keepers of the MS (Aleph) say that one of the three scribes who worked on that MS was a poor speller, but when compared with the "illiteracy" of another of the three, he came out looking pretty good! "The number and variety of corrections which have been made. . .in the Codex Sinaiticus place it in a class by itself." Repeatedly, whole sentences were dropped. The scribe had a "wandering eye." There is strong evidence that at least one of the scribes working on Aleph did not even know the Greek language! B, in the gospels alone, leaves out words or whole clauses at least 1,491 times! Burgon, one of the most learned textual scholars who ever lived, tells us, "Without a particle of hesitation, they are. . .the most scandalously corrupt copies extant."

So I do not apologize: the two MSS upon which the newer translations are based are "demonstrably among the most corrupt in existence." And it doesn't take a textual expert to know that!

White says, ". . .to pick any two manuscripts which are variant and arbitrarily designate one as corrupt and the other as pure is

just so much guesswork." This misses the issue at hand. We are not discussing "any two manuscripts." We are dealing with a situation where some 90% of the extant Greek MSS reflect one text, and a mere handful reflect another.

White's Response

(White proceeds to quote Geisler and Nix, Bruce, and Greenlee in favor of the witness of B and Aleph.)

Consider the following:

The Codex Vaticanus is perhaps the oldest uncial on parchment or vellum (c. 325-50), and one of the most important witnesses to the text of the New Testament.²

This fourth century Greek manuscript (Codex Sinaiticus) is generally considered to be the most important witness to the text because of *its antiquity, accuracy, and lack of omissions.*" (italics mine)³

The great Greek Biblical manuscripts—the Sinaitic, Vatican and Alexandrian codices, the Chester Beatty collection, and others—are manuscripts of the whole Greek Bible, and are thus witnesses to the text of both the Greek New Testament and of the Septuagint.⁴

Cod. Aleph (01). Cod. Sinaiticus, written in the fourth century, one of the two most famous uncial mass, is now on permanent display in the British Museum in London. It contains the complete N.T. . . .⁵

Cod. B (13), Cod. Vaticanus, is other of the two most famous uncial mass. *Written in the fourth century*, it is probably the best single ms. of the N.T. (italics mine)⁶

²Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p. 271.

"Gisbre and Nix, p. 273.

⁴F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Westwood, New Jersey: Revell, 1963), p. 161-162.

⁵J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Erdmann, 1964), p. 37.

⁶Greenlee, p. 39; it may be noted that other equally praiseworthy comments are to be found in the mass of scholarly works which may be found listed in the bibliographies of any of the above listed books in footnotes 2-5, such as Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got /sic/ the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965); Bruce W. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); etc.

Segraces' Rejoinder

The scholars whom White has marshalled are, of course, on his side. I am aware of that, and have quoted from some of them elsewhere in this volume. But it escapes me how a competent textual scholar could call Aleph an important witness because of its "accuracy, and lack of omissions." It is not an *opinion*, but a *fact*, that Aleph is covered with mistakes and omissions. Again I refer the reader to pages 103 through 109. According to the Museum where the MS is housed, "The number and variety of corrections which have been made from time to time in the Codex Sinaiticus place it in a class by itself." This would indicate that it stands alone as having had more admitted mistakes than any other MS in existence! And the keepers of the MS would have no reason to deceive. Many of these errors have had no attempt at correction on them: ". . .unfortunately the work was not systematically carried out, and large stretches of the manuscript were left untouched, or only sporadically corrected." Notice further the Museum's description:

The reader who dictated the Gospels must have been singularly careless, for again and again whole sentences have dropped out where his wandering eye had failed to keep the place. . .there actually are some curious errors in the Codex Sinaiticus. . . .

Burgon says that the scribe who carried out the work was “singularly careless, or incompetent, or both.” He divided two letter words in half, resulting in senseless readings! Scrivener says, “Complete lines are omitted.”

Either White’s sources are wrong, or prejudiced, or mine are. And I have before me reproductions of Aleph provided by the British Museum. While I make no claim to being a textual scholar, even I can see the evidences of corrections and marginal attempts made to “fix up” the mistakes of another scribe.

I do not doubt Bruce’s scholarship. But it is difficult for me to see how he can say the Simaitic and Vatican codices are “witnesses to the text of. . .the New Testament,” and it is especially hard for me to accept Greenlee’s statement that Sinaiticus “contains the complete N.T.,” when the fact is that neither of these MSS contain the entire New Testament. The Vaticanus is missing the Book of Revelation, part of Hebrews, and several other New Testament Books. Both B and Aleph join in omitting Mark 16:9-20, though B does it by leaving a blank space for it. Are the statements by these textual scholars completely honest?

The Article

The monks at the monastery on Mt. Sinai thought so highly of the manuscript now dubbed Codex Sinaiticus that they had consigned it to the wastepaper basket for burning! Dr. Tischendorf snatched it from its fate just in

time to perpetrate it upon the world. But how many people know about the vast gaps, the forgotten segments, and the obvious carelessness or ineptitude of the scribe who copied it? Who can tell you about the many attempts, in various hands, made at correcting this manuscript, until evidently it was given up as hopeless?

White's Response

Once again in this section we encounter more undocumented suggestions. First, the fact that the Codex Sinaiticus was about to be discarded is no certain sign of its unworthiness. People have often made equally as ignorant mistakes. In fact, just because it was to be discarded does not necessarily mean that the monks considered it as worthless. They may even have copied it themselves and decided that the original was no longer needed. Whatever the case, the opinion of the monks at Sinai need not be held as decisive, one way or another. Then, to accuse Dr. Tischendorf of "perpetrating" this manuscript on the world is akin to calling the manuscript (or Tischendorf himself) a hoax. Such a proposal will not find a vestige of support in the scholarly world!

Segraves' Rejoinder

We will wait a moment to see what White considers "undocumented suggestions." I agree with his second sentence and third sentence above. But it is his fourth and fifth sentences which do "not find a vestige of support in the scholarly world." I have never read anywhere else the suggestion that the monks may have copied Sinaiticus before deciding to burn it. (Because I have never read it does not mean it hasn't been suggested, but it at least is not a well known idea.)

I agree full well that I could have used a better word than "perpetrating." Though one notorious forger of manuscripts, Constantine Simonides, claimed Aleph was one of his productions, the evidence is against it. I am sure that neither the MS nor Tischendorf was a hoax. But that, of course, has nothing to do with the position I have taken.

White's Response

And as for the gaps, forgotten segments, carelessness of scribal transmission, etc., who indeed can tell us of that? The scholars certainly do not emphasize it, for they hold the manuscript in the highest regard, as we have already seen. The abuses which the Sinaitic manuscript may have suffered were not greatly different than what many of our other valuable manuscripts have suffered.

Segraves' Rejoinder

Who can tell us of the gaps, forgotten segments, carelessness, etc.? Well, for one, the keepers of the MS at the British Museum. We have already seen their testimony. In addition, those who have examined the MS tell us of its corruption. Scrivener and Burgon agree that B and Aleph are corrupt.

White's question here causes me to wonder more seriously if he has read Fuller's books, for they contain Burgon's account and explicit details of the "scandalous corruption" of these MSS.

The Article

The *Codex Vaticanus*, as suggested by its very name, is that manuscript with a very secretive past, which resided in some nook or cranny of the Vatican. I'll leave it to

you to decide if you would trust its custodians to present to us the pure Word of God! Actually, the Codex Vaticanus differs from the Received Text (which agrees with the King James Version) as follows, in *the four gospels alone*: It omits at least 2,877 words; it adds 536 words; it substitutes 935 words; it transposes 2,098 words; and it modifies 1,132; making a total of 7,578 verbal divergencies! Even worse is the Codex Sinaiticus, with total differences of nearly nine thousand!

White's Response

The Codex Vaticanus with its "secretive past" is next. To say that the manuscript has a "secretive past" implies something more than just an unknown past. Yet, there is absolutely no evidence whatever upon which to base the allusion that because it resided in the Vatican it is somehow untrustworthy. The fact is, the majority of manuscripts which we appeal to today in fixing the text (including the Byzantine family) were under the custodianship of the Roman church at one time or another, so what is the value of such an argument? Furthermore, to insinuate that the monks at Sinai held a low opinion of Codex Sinaiticus and that we should accept their evaluation, and then, in the next breath to turn around and dismiss Codex Vaticanus because it was under the care of the Roman church is self-contradictory. Were the Sinai monks of such high status and the librarians in Rome of such low status that we must accept the opinion of the one and repudiate the integrity of the other?

Sograves' Rejoinder

I agree: "secretive" is not a good word. The past of B is, however, unknown. No one knows how it got into the library at the Vatican.

Concerning White's claim that most MSS, including the Byzantine, were under Roman care: I have never read such a statement either from those on his side of the issue or mine. The Roman church specialized in *Latin* MSS. The eastern church preserved the Greek MSS during the 1,500 years of the Byzantine Empire. When the fall of Byzantium was at hand, many scholars escaped back into the West with their MSS, which resulted in a renewed study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, a revival of learning, and ultimately the Reformation. White's third point is well taken: Both the Vatican and St. Catherine's Monastery are obviously Roman Catholic institutions. The opinion of one would be just about as good as that of the other. The monks were going to throw their MS away, and the Vatican librarian was letting theirs sit idle on the shelf.

White's Response

Concerning the variants between the Received Text and the Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, we seem to have a false assumption. Without any proof, the article assumes *a priori* that the Received Text is right and the Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are wrong, *in spite of the fact that the latter two are much older!*

Segraves' Rejoinder

White has already said that the age of a MS proves nothing alone. He assumes *a priori* that B and Aleph are right and the Received Text wrong. And in this treatise, we have extensive proof offered in addition to that given in the article. For my response to the argument that older is better, I refer the reader to pages 98 through 103.

White's Response

On the basis of this assumption, Codex Vaticanus allegedly "omits words", "substitutes words", "transposes" and "modifies" words. What is much more likely (and, incidentally, what is the unanimous opinion of today's best scholars) is that it is the Received Text which has added words and made substitutions, transpositions and modifications. In some cases (e.g., 1 John 5:7, 8) there is positive proof that the Received Text contains interpolations for which there is little or no manuscript authority. (More on this later.)

Segrates' Rejoinder

Again, I refer the reader to pages 103 through 109. Then, I must point out that it indeed is not the unanimous opinion of today's best scholars that the Received Text has added words, etc. That it is the majority opinion, I will not deny. But where are the better scholars than van Bruggen, Pickering, or Hills?

By accusing the Received Text of being the guilty culprit in adding words, making substitutions, transpositions, and modifications, White has created for himself a dilemma. He "uses" the KJV, based on the Received Text, because it is "most familiar." How can he do this if it is the Received Text that is wrong every time it differs from the Codex Vaticanus? Does he believe it is justifiable to use a corrupt Bible because it is "most familiar"? Does he not think that if God's words are added to, lies are produced? (See Proverbs 30:6.) It would appear to me that if White really believes what he claims, and if he thinks through the implications, he must shun the KJV at all costs. For in that book are words (according to his view) "masquerading" as the Word of God. If he does use it, he must be careful to point out to his students every case where

it differs from what he believes to be God's Word (not just I John 5:7, 8, but in every one of the thousands of cases where the Received Text differs from the constructed text of W-H, etc.).

Since White wishes to defer discussion of I John 5:7, 8 until later, we will do so. But before we leave this section, I want to make clear that Codex Vaticanus does not "allegedly" omit words. It is a *fact* that it omits words. When we say this MS leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times, we are not talking about in comparison to the Received Text! We are referring to plain omissions all scholars would recognize as the results of "careless transcription on every page." When compared to the Received Text, B omits 2,877 words, etc., for a total of 7,758 verbal divergences. In other words, whether a scholar is in favor of the W-H textual theory or not, he recognizes that *in the gospels alone* B omits at least 1,491 words or whole clauses. But if he compares the MS with the received text, the differences are much greater. Would White have us believe the King James Version is wrong in 7,758 places? Does he point out each of these to his students?

White's Response

That there are variants between the Received Text and the Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus cannot be denied. But to arbitrarily assign those discrepancies to the inferiority of the latter and the superiority of the former is against the entirety of modern textual scholarship.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I fully agree with the first sentence. But the second sentence is not true. First, the belief that B and Aleph are inferior is not an "arbitrary" one. As MSS go, they are plainly inferior on their

face. The work of the scribes is inferior. This is not my opinion; it is a fact. But the superiority of the Received Text is not an "arbitrary" decision either. The thing that is "arbitrary" is W-H's assumption that because B and Aleph may be as much as one hundred years older than any extant Greek MSS supporting the Majority Text, they are automatically better. This has been demonstrated time and again to be false. (See pages 98 through 103.) Finally, White cannot claim the "entirety of modern textual scholarship." There is a sizeable, and growing, school of thought to the contrary.

The Article

And these are the "ancient authorities" which, almost without exception, modern translations follow!

White's Response

Some clarification is in order here. While the Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are certainly considered of first rate importance by modern scholars, it must not be misconstrued that they are automatically the deciding factors in deciding between textual variants. The praxis of textual criticism is too lengthy to discuss here, but suffice it to say that a wide range of external as well as internal evidences are considered, and they take in the entirety of the several thousand available New Testament manuscripts.⁷

⁷For an explanation of the praxis of textual criticism, the following works, some of which have been referred to earlier, are valuable: Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), p. 51, 52; F. F. Bruce, p 176-190, 219-238; Geisler and Nix, p 367-375; Greenlee, p 96-134.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I refer the reader to my discussion of the praxis of textual criticism on pages 17 through 109. White says we must not misconstrue that B and Aleph “are automatically the deciding factors in deciding between textual variants.” He suggests that modern textual criticism takes in “the entirety of the several thousand available New Testament manuscripts.” Since he has cited Greenlee in support of his view, let’s see what Greenlee says about this.

One numerically small group of witnesses seems to have escaped the corruptions of all three other text-types and to have preserved the text virtually in its original form. This is the “Neutral” text. It is represented especially in the agreement of B and [Aleph], together with a few other witnesses. Sometimes the secondary witnesses desert the Neutral text to follow the Alexandrian variant, leaving the original text in B and [Aleph] with very little additional support. The text of B, moreover, is so superior that its text must always be given close attention, and in frequent instances the text of B is decisive over all other witnesses.

The text of W-H is therefore an essentially “Neutral” or “B [Aleph]” text, or even a “B” text.²⁴

It is an established fact that all current Greek texts, reflected in all modern translations, vary only slightly from the text of W-H. Greenlee himself says, “The textual theory of W-H underlies virtually all subsequent work in New Testament textual criticism.”²⁵ Pickering points out that “the two most popular manual editions of the Greek text today, Nestle-Aland and UBS (United Bible Society), really vary little from the W-H text. The recent versions—RSV, NEB, etc.—also vary little from the W-H text.”²⁶

Now just how numerous is the group of MSS supporting the text reflected in W-H, Neale-Aland, URSGNT, and the modern versions? Greenlee says it is a "numerically small group of witnesses." It is "represented especially in the agreement of B and Aleph, together with a few other witnesses." But even those "few" desert B and Aleph, leaving the "original" text (Greenlee's opinion only) with very little additional support. But, alas, B and Aleph often disagree (Burton said it was easier to find a place where they disagree than where they agree!). Greenlee plainly admits that the text of W-H is essentially based on two MSS alone, B and Aleph. Then, he further qualifies his statement by saying that the W-H text could even be called a B text. In other words, in the final analysis, one MS, *Codex Vaticanus*, was the deciding factor for W-H, and thus for the current Greek texts and modern versions.

Indeed, current textual criticism does not "take in the entirety of the several thousand available New Testament manuscripts." There are only slightly over 5,000 Greek MSS extant. Some 90% of these reflect the same text, properly called the Majority Text. There are not even one thousand MSS extant supporting the text of W-H. Basically, current textual criticism appeals to about five MSS, but one often has the deciding vote. Current textual criticism reduces the thousands of extant MSS to one vote, because they all represent the same text!

What is the "wide range of external as well as internal evidences" to which White alludes? We will again allow a scholar from whom White draws his conclusions, Greenlee, to comment:

The decision of which is the best reading in a variant involves both internal and external evidence. Internal evidence deals with the *probabilities* of what a scribe *might have done*, intentionally or unintentionally, which would have produced a different reading; external evidence deals

with the mss. and other witnesses to the text in order to decide which reading has the best support by these witnesses. . .there may be some advantage in considering internal evidence first, since it is more subjective, so that one's thinking will not from the first be *unduly influenced* by the evidence of the mss.²⁷ (Emphasis mine.)

So the internal evidence deals with what the scribe may have done; external evidence deals with the testimony of the MSS themselves. But, as Greenlee knows, the overwhelming majority of MSS support the Byzantine text. So he suggests it may be best to consider the internal evidence first, so that one will not be "unduly influenced." And how sure is this internal evidence? It rests on the "probabilities" of what a scribe "might have done"? Greenlee admits that the principles (which we have already discussed on page 26 f.) "may seem to contradict each other."²⁸ What must be considered in reaching a conclusion? "Relative probabilities."²⁹ To restate briefly the "wide range of. . .internal evidenccs," they are:

1. The shorter reading is often preferable.
2. The harder reading is often preferable.
3. The reading from which the other readings in a variant could most easily have developed is preferable.
4. The reading which is characteristic of the author is generally preferable.³⁰

We have discussed the problems with these theoretical guidelines for reconstructing the original text on page 26 f. But even Greenlee realizes the potential for problems.

If the two are apparently contradictory, a satisfactory solution must be sought. To disregard external evidence and depend too completely upon internal evidence may lead to unduly subjective decisions. At the same time, one

must not depend upon external evidence without proper regard to internal considerations, since no MS. or text-type is perfectly trustworthy.²¹

So Greenlee wants us to consider the internal evidence (the four points above) first, so we will not be "unduly influenced" by the external evidence of the MSS. But internal evidence may lead us to be "unduly subjective" if we do not give proper regard to external evidence! What did W-H do with their slavish dependence upon one MS. B? Were they not moved almost solely by *internal* evidence?

The Article

The King James Version, in the mean time, is in harmony with what has been variously called the *Received Text*, the *Majority Text*, and the *Textus Receptus*. As the titles imply, this is the text which has developed from the vast, overwhelming majority of ancient manuscripts. The ratio of manuscripts which are in harmony with the King James Version, as opposed to the newer translations, is roughly 999 to 1! The King James Version agrees with the pure Word of God preserved by the life of the Waldensians, who were brutally persecuted and martyred in a desperate attempt to pluck the Holy Bible from their hands. It is in agreement with the *Codex Alexandrinus*, probably from the fifth century.

White's Response

That the King James Version is in harmony with the Received Text is only natural. It certainly ought to be inasmuch as that is the text from which it was translated. It is the next area of argument

where one could wish for a more objective approach. The best that can be said for the proposal that the Received Text was prepared from the “vast overwhelming majority of ancient manuscripts” is that it is misleading. To understand why this is so, one must have at least a minimal background in textual criticism.

Segraves’ Rejoinder

I did not say that the Received Text “was prepared from” the majority of MSS; I said “this is the text which has *developed from*” the majority of MSS. White will certainly say that Erasmus did not have thousands of MSS at his disposal. I agree. But the MSS he *did* have represented accurately the Majority Text. He did not have to have every single one to examine; the ones he had were representative of those he did not have.

White’s Response

Initially, one should know something of the manuscript families. The thousands of New Testament manuscripts are categorized by scholars into four major families, the Alexandrian, Caesarean, Western and Byzantine.⁸ Of these many manuscripts, the majority are of a late date, of inferior quality, and belong to the Byzantine family.⁹

⁸Geisler and Nix, pp. 388-393.

⁹Bruce, p. 187; Geisler and Nix, p. 391.

Segraves’ Rejoinder

I have discussed in detail the matter of “families” or “text-types,” beginning on page 44. Contrary to what White implies, scholars are by no means agreed upon four definite text-types. Some see

only three.²² Bruce admits that there are some who question the existence of text-types at all.²³ Parvis says,

We have reconstructed text-types and families and sub-families and in so doing have created things that never before existed on earth or in heaven. . . . But when we have found that a particular manuscript would not fit into any of our nicely constructed schemes, we have thrown up our hands and said that it contained a mixed text.²⁴

Aland sees only two text-types, the Majority Text and the Egyptian (Alexandrian).²⁵ Kenyon says there is no one MS extant which even approximately represents the so-called "Western" text.²⁶ E. C. Colwell, the 25th edition of Nestle, and Klijn all agree that the "Western" text does not exist as an identifiable group.²⁷ Concerning the MSS which are identified as "Byzantine," they are not just the "majority." They represent about 90% of the extant MSS. That they are of later date than B and Aleph, we do not deny. We have already discussed that. That they are of "inferior quality" is an opinion only. The truly inferior MSS are B and Aleph, as we have seen.

White's Response

The lateness and inferiority of the Byzantine text rests on several bases, two of which are:

1. *Conflation*: Conflation is the combining of two or more variants into one reading.¹⁰ Significantly, it is the Byzantine family which has a marked evidence of conflation.¹¹ As such, the Byzantine text must at least be later than the two texts from which the variants are drawn, and at the same time, the Byzantine text has not rectified the discrepancies.

By combining the two variants rather than choosing between them, the Byzantine manuscripts appear to be much more uniform, when in actuality they are the least accurate.

¹⁰Geisler and Nix, p. 364.

¹¹Bruce, p. 187.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I have discussed at length the issue of “conflation” on pages 55 through 58, to which I refer the reader. Here, it will be sufficient to say that the entire theory of conflations, developed by Hort, rests on *eight* “examples” drawn solely from Mark and Luke! Pickering calls this kind of characterization of a text on the basis of so few illustrations “foolish,”³⁸ a strong word, but appropriate. Van Bruggen says,

. . . It would not be difficult to “prove”, with the aid of specially chosen examples from other text-types, that those types are also guilty of harmonizing, conflating readings and smoothing the diction. Here illustrations do not prove anything. After all, one could without much difficulty give a large number of examples from the Byzantine text to support the proposition that this text does *not* harmonize and does *not* smooth away.³⁹

White's Response

2. *Lack of Early Attestation:*¹² The Byzantine text cannot be attested at any period during the first three centuries of the Christian church by either translation or citation from the Fathers. While it has been proven that the majority of the New Testament could be reproduced by patristic quotation

alone."¹² it is not until Chrysostom (347-407) that one can find any clear citation of a Byzantine character. Thus, the Byzantine text is late and is markedly inferior to the other families which do have attestation from the early period.

¹²Bruce, p. 187.

"Bruce, p. 187.

Segrars' Rejoinder

I have discussed this argument beginning on page 99. But let us look into it a bit further here. White follows scholars like Bruce in claiming that the Byzantine text has no early attestation, and that it is therefore "late" and "markedly inferior." This is by no means the only view advanced by scholars. Van Bruggen has an entire chapter on "The Age of the Byzantine Type," from which we quote some excerpts:

One of the first things a student must learn regarding the textual history, is the distinction between the age of the manuscript and the age of the text offered in that manuscript. A rather young manuscript can give a very old type of text. . . . The common argument used against the Byzantine text-type is even that this type is only found in young manuscripts. This argument, however, does not say anything as such. One must prove that the *text-form* in these manuscripts is also of later date.

Hort tried to prove this with an appeal to the fact that the Church Fathers before Nicea did not use a Byzantine text. Now he himself admits that one must be cautious when dealing with the New Testament quotations in the writings of the Church Fathers. In the progress of the textual tradition

these quotations have often been altered to fit later text-types. It also often appears that the Church Fathers only quoted in part and freely, so that one can hardly conclude from the form of their quotation the form of the text they read in the New Testament. The value of Hort's arguments is limited even more drastically when he has to admit that we only have clear patristic material from the period 175-250 A.D. It surely did not escape Hort that two of the Greek Fathers in this period mentioned by him (Irenaeus and Hippolytus) lived in the West. The other two (Clement of Alexandria and Origen) come from Egypt. This means that we are left with a blank spot on the map: What would the text of the Church Fathers from Antioch have looked like in this period? We do not know. That we encounter text-usage which is not clearly Byzantine in the writings that have been preserved for us is not surprising. These Church writers used the texts that were current. The form of their text is not necessarily better than that of the manuscripts circulating in their region. But then the pressing question is whether they lived at a time and in a region in which the textual tradition was at its best, or in a time and region in which this tradition was just disturbed by all sorts of influences in the 2nd century. . . .

How the date can often be interpreted in various ways is also shown by the fact that Boismard even develops the hypothesis that a separate Church Father text-type can be distinguished. . . . Baarda gives a provisional conclusion on the text-type that Aphrahat followed and points out that his text stands nearest to the Egyptian text. Yet on the basis of the data given by Baarda one could claim with even more right that Aphrahat's text stands nearest to the Byzantine type. This. . . illustrates the difficulty that

remains if one concludes that the Byzantine text was unknown before Nicea on the basis of a few Church Fathers from a limited number of readings. How can this text then directly afterwards suddenly be known. . .in the writings of Eustathius of Antioch (beginning 4th century), and in the writings of the Syrian Aphrahat? How can this text be found in a section of Chrysostom's works as the known text? One could say: this now proves that this Byzantine text was made at the time of Nicea. But how did it manage to spread so quickly? Through what influence? And why are there no indications, in the writings of the 4th century, that the writers were aware that they were introducing a newer text?

. . .The fact that the Byzantine text is already used in the 4th century as a normal text proves that it must be from an earlier date and was not regarded as "new". If this text is not distinctly followed by Egyptian Fathers and at the same time is found in the first surviving writings from Antioch and its surroundings, then we have every reason to suppose that our view on the most ancient textual history would change considerably if we knew more about the blank spot that is left over on the historical map: Antioch before the 4th century. . . . A person who has insufficient data for making a reconstruction of an old building, is still not permitted to assume that the original building looked like the ruins that he is left with.

. . .How is the situation in the field of New Testament manuscripts? Do we have a representative number of manuscripts from the first centuries? Only if that is the case, do we have the right to make conclusions and positive statements. . . . The situation is even such that we know with certainty that we *do not* possess a representative

number of manuscripts from the first centuries. . . .

. . . In the 9th century. . . the most important New Testament manuscripts written in majuscule script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script. It is assumed that after this transliteration-process the majuscule was taken out of circulation. . . just the oldest, best and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new uniform of the minuscule script. . . . There certainly were majuscules just as venerable and ancient as the surviving *Vaticanus* or *Sinaiticus*, which, like a section of the *Alexandrinus*, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script and their majuscule-appearance has vanished. . . .

. . . The papyri have shown clearly that readings which do not occur in the older manuscripts and therefore were called late and Byzantine, do occur in the 2nd and 3rd century: . . . According to the theory of Hort the number of "Byzantine" readings would become less the further we go back into the past. Yet it seems to be increasing! . . . in an unexpected area (Egypt!) the "Byzantine" readings do not decrease, but increase, the deeper we penetrate into the first centuries. If the modern scholarship of the New Testament textual criticism did not have that prejudice against the Byzantine text, then there would be every reason to hypothesize a gradual "de-byzantinizing" of the text, which resulted in the text-type of the older surviving majuscules, and which was reversed in the remainder of the textual tradition.⁴⁰

White's position, and that of those scholars who support it, is an *assumption*. And it is a false assumption, as Pickering shows:

To demand that a MS survive for 1,500 years is in

effect to require both that it have remained unused and that it have been stored in Egypt (or Qumran.) Even an unused MS would require an arid climate to last so long. . . . Unless there were persons so rich as to be able to proliferate copies of the Scriptures for their health or amusement, copies would be made on demand, in order to be used. As the use of Greek died out in Egypt the demand for Greek Scriptures would die out too, so we should not expect to find many Greek MSS in Egypt.⁴¹

Pickering then quotes Lake, Blake, and New, who said, "It is hard to resist the conclusion that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they had copied the sacred books."⁴² Pickering asks,

Is it unreasonable to suppose that once an old MS became tattered and almost illegible in spots the faithful would make an exact copy of it and then destroy it, rather than allowing it to suffer the indignity of literally rotting away? What would such a practice do to our chances of finding an early "Byzantine" MS?⁴³

Indeed, this is precisely what the Jewish scribes did with their Hebrew exemplars, and there is no reason to think that the scribes copying the New Testament would do any differently: 1) The Jews had proven to the world the most accurate and efficient manner in which to preserve accurately the contents of MSS; and, 2) Many of the scribes who copied the New Testament Scriptures were converted Jews, who brought over into Christianity with them their knowledge of MS copying and their total reverence for the written Word of God.

Those who magnify the early age of B and Aleph should be cautious. As Pickering comments, "Early age in a MS might well

arouse our suspicions—why did it survive?”¹⁴ Burgon credited the survival of B and Aleph solely to their “ascertained evil character.” In other words, they are with us today because those who lived during the time span in which they were copied realized their corrupt nature and refrained from using them to make further copies. If they were indeed valuable witnesses to the text of the New Testament, scholars and scribes long before our time would have copied them again and again, resulting in their becoming worn, tattered, and eventually destroyed. Indeed, their excellent physical condition after 1,500 years (not the quality of the scribal work) testifies strongly to the fact that they were scrupulously avoided by those who knew a corrupt text when they saw one. What has happened today is that the castoff of a millennium and a half ago has been reclaimed and made the principle witness. Current textual criticism has digressed, rather than progressed.

White's Response

Beyond this, one should carefully observe the haphazard process by which the Received Text was produced.¹⁴ In 1515, the scholar Erasmus was engaged to prepare an edition of the Greek New Testament as quickly as possible. He used only six manuscripts, five of which were Byzantine. The other, non-Byzantine text he used only cursorily. Within these six manuscripts, only one contained the Book of Revelation, and it was so mutilated that he was forced to supply the missing passages (including the last six verses) by retranslating from the Latin. He finished this edition in only seven months. Four editions of this Greek New Testament were published, and in the third edition there appears the famous interpolation of I John 5:7, 8 which Erasmus rashly injected on the basis of a single, highly questionable Greek manuscript of the 16th century (which Erasmus himself suggested might have been specially prepared or

forged). There was absolutely no other manuscript evidence for this interpolation, and it does not even appear in the Latin Vulgate itself until the 8th century. Unfortunately, this third edition was followed in the Received Text.

"Ceverier, p. 69-77 (the ensuing discussion is taken primarily from Greenlee, but it should be pointed out that the same facts may be found in a variety of other scholarly sources, e.g., D. Edmond Hiebert, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), III, pp. 207-208, etc.)

Sogrates' Rejoinder

For those on the side of the W-H textual theory, Erasmus is a favorite whipping boy. They delight in using words like "haphazard," "quickly," and "rashly." What they fail to note is that if their preconceived assumptions concerning the superiority of B and Aleph are proven to be faulty, any haste on Erasmus' part gives them no support at all! Their argument about Erasmus is valid only if they have previously proven, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Byzantine text is inferior. They have not done this.

It is true that Erasmus did not have a great number of MSS before him. But the MSS he did have represented the broad stream of the Majority Text. Thus, whether he had five or five hundred makes little difference.

Hills comments,

A further step in the providential preservation of the New Testament was the printing of it in 1516 and the dissemination of it through the whole of Western Europe during the Protestant Reformation. In the first printing of the Greek New Testament we see God's preserving providence working hiddenly and, to the outward eye, acciden-

tally. The editor, Erasmus, performed his task in great haste in order to meet the deadline set by the printer. . . . Hence the first edition contained a number of errors of a minor sort, some of which persisted in later editions. But in all essentials the New Testament text first printed by Erasmus and later by Stephanus (1550) and Elzevir (1633) is in full agreement with the Traditional Text providentially preserved in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. . . . There was no man in all Europe better prepared than Erasmus for the work of editing the first printed Greek New Testament text, and this is why, we may well believe, God chose him and directed him providentially in the accomplishment of this task. . . .

Through his study of the writings of Jerome and other Church Fathers Erasmus became very well informed concerning the variant readings of the New Testament text. Indeed almost all the important variant readings known to scholars today were already known to Erasmus more than 460 years ago and discussed in the notes. . . .which he placed after the text in his editions of the Greek New Testament. . . .

. . . In the editing of his Greek New Testament especially Erasmus was guided by the common faith in the current text. And back of this common faith was the controlling providence of God. For this reason Erasmus' humanistic tendencies do not appear in the *Textus Receptus* which he produced. Although not himself outstanding as a man of faith, in his editorial labors on this text he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others. In spite of his humanistic tendencies Erasmus was clearly used of God to place the Greek New Testament text in print, just as Martin Luther was used of God to bring in

the Protestant Reformation in spite of the fact that, at least at first, he shared Erasmus' doubts concerning Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation.⁴⁴

The issue at hand is not *Erasmus*, but the text. All of the debate in the world about Erasmus' humanism (which was certainly not the humanism of the twentieth century), his haste, or his rashness means nothing. The only question of import is: Is the Majority Text the Word of God, or the Minority Text? Though Erasmus had only five Greek MSS, he had a vast knowledge of variant readings. It is an undeniable fact, indeed even the scholars on White's side do not deny, that Erasmus' text is the Majority Text. That is the only important issue.

But now we come to the statement which alleges that Erasmus supplied certain verses by retranslating from the Latin. (I will explain the use of the word "alleges" momentarily.) Does this mean that the resultant Greek text is corrupt? Hills comments:

There are, however, a few places in which the *Textus Receptus* differs from the Traditional text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. The most important of these differences are due to the fact that Erasmus, influenced by the usage of the Latin-speaking Church in which he was reared, sometimes followed the Latin Vulgate rather than the Traditional Greek text.

Are the readings which Erasmus thus introduced into the *Textus Receptus* necessarily erroneous? By no means ought we to infer this. For it is inconceivable that the divine providence which had preserved the New Testament text during the long ages of the manuscript period should blunder when at last this text was committed to the printing press. According to the analogy of faith, then, we

conclude that the Textus Receptus was a further step in God's providential preservation of the New Testament text and that these few Latin Vulgate readings which were incorporated into the Textus Receptus were genuine readings which had been preserved in the usage of the Latin-speaking Church. . . In the Textus Receptus God corrected the few mistakes of any consequence which yet remained in the Traditional text of the majority of the Greek manuscripts. . .these Vulgate readings are also found in other ancient witnesses, namely, old Greek manuscripts, versions, and Fathers.⁴⁶

What this basically comes down to is whether we believe God providentially inspired His Word *and* providentially preserved it to all generations. (See Psalm 12:6, 7.) Can we believe that God was so unconcerned, or uninvolved, in the preservation and continuing purity of His Word that He allowed the first Greek text to come off the press to be corrupt (not just in a few places, but, according to White's theory, in thousands of places)? I *cannot*, in good conscience, agree with the latter proposition. God knew full well the influence of the printing press and that the first text thus produced would reign for hundreds of years. Indeed, through the KJV, it *still* reigns, much to the chagrin of its detractors.

Concerning, now, the "alleged" retranslations Erasmus did from the Latin: Even if this allegation were true, it would not disprove our thesis, i.e. that God was providentially working to bring to believers His pure Word. But not all scholars are agreed that Erasmus did so. The brilliant H. C. Hoskier suggests that, instead of translating from the Latin, Erasmus followed Greek Codex 141.⁴⁷

But what of "The Johannine Comma" (I John 5:7, 8) that Erasmus "rashly injected" into his text? First, it is *not* true that there is "absolutely no other manuscript evidence" for this passage.

The section in question is found in Codex Ravianus and No. 61, and in the marginal notes of MSS 88 and 629. These are all Greek MSS. It was quoted by Cyprian more than half a century before B and Aleph were produced. A Spanish bishop quoted it in A.D. 380. Many African Christians referred to it from 430 to 534. Cassiodorus (480-570) quoted it. The passage is found in the Old Latin MS R, which was copied more than one hundred years before B and Aleph.

Let us now note specifically which words make up "The Johannine Comma." They are underlined below.

For there are three that bear witness in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one* (I John 5:7, 8).

Completely aside from the MS evidence, which is not nearly as scant as the detractors from this passage would suggest, we notice immediately the grammatical difficulty which would ensue if this passage is omitted from Scripture.

...The omission of the *Johannine comma* involves a grammatical difficulty. The words *spirit, water, and blood* are neuter in gender, but in I John 5:8 they are treated as masculine. If the *Johannine comma* is rejected, it is hard to explain this irregularity. . . . If, however, the *Johannine comma* is retained, a reason for placing the neuter nouns *spirit, water, and blood* in the masculine gender becomes readily apparent.⁴⁴

Dabney also speaks to this:

The internal evidence against the omission is as follows:

1. The masculine article, numeral and participle HOI TREIS MARTUROUNTES, are made to agree directly with three neuters, an insuperable and very bald grammatical difficulty. If the disputed words are allowed to remain, they agree with two masculines and one neuter noun HO PATER, HO LOGOS, KAI HO HAGION PNEUMA and, according to the rule of syntax, the masculines among the group control the gender over a neuter connected with them. Then the occurrence of the masculines among TREIS MARTUROUNTES in verse 8 agreeing with the neuters PNEUMA, HUDOR and HAIMA may be accounted for by the power of attraction, well known in Greek syntax.
2. If the disputed words are omitted, the 8th verse coming next to the 6th gives a very bald and awkward, and apparently meaningless repetition of the Spirit's witness twice in immediate succession.
3. If the words are omitted, the concluding words at the end of verse 8 contain an unintelligible reference. The Greek words KAI HOI TREIS EIS TO HEN EISIN mean precisely – “and these three agree to that (aforesaid) One.” This rendering preserves the force of the definite article in this verse. Then what is “that One” to which “these three” are said to agree? If the 7th verse is omitted “that One” does not appear, and “that One” in verse 8, which designates One to whom the reader has already been introduced, has no antecedent presence in the passage. Let verse 7 stand, and all is clear. . . .⁴⁹

Are there any reasonable explanations as to why the *comma* could have been dropped from the majority of MSS? Hills says,

. . . The *comma* could easily have been omitted accidentally through a common type of error which is called *homoioteleuton* (similar ending). A scribe copying 1 John 5:7-8 under distracting conditions might have begun to write down these words of verse 7, *there are three that bear witness*, but have been forced to look up before his pen had completed this task. When he resumed his work, his eye fell by mistake on the identical expression in verse 8. This error could cause him to omit all of the *Johannine comma* except the words *in earth*, and these might easily have been dropped later in the copying of this faulty copy. Such an accidental omission might even have occurred several times, and in this way there might have grown up a considerable number of Greek manuscripts which did not contain this reading.⁵⁰

Is there any conceivable reason the *comma* could have been dropped on *purpose*? Hills continues,

It is possible. . .that the Sabellian heresy brought the *Johannine comma* into disfavor with orthodox Christians. The statement, *these three are one*, no doubt seemed to them to teach the Sabellian view that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were identical. And if during the course of the controversy manuscripts were discovered which had lost this reading in the accidental manner described above, it is easy to see how the orthodox party would consider these mutilated manuscripts to represent the true text and regard the *Johannine comma* as a heretical addition. . .⁵¹

So the issue is not nearly so simple as White would make it. If, indeed, there is any remote possibility that the KJV reading of I John 5:7, 8 is the true Word of God (and I believe it is), Christians should be extremely hesitant to cast it aside.⁵²

White's Response

The second stage behind producing the Received Text was the production of the Complutensian Polyglot, a trilingual Bible in Hebrew, Latin and Greek.

The third stage occurred in the mid-16th century when Robert Estienne (sometimes referred to as Stephanus) published four editions of the Greek New Testament using the third edition of Erasmus, the Complutensian Polyglot and some fifteen other manuscripts.

Later still, Theodore Beza published nine editions of the Greek New Testament following the work of Erasmus and Stephanus. Finally, the Elzevir brothers of Holland in the mid-17th century published seven editions of the Greek New Testament based on the work of Stephanus and Beza. In all of these transmissions, *little revision or serious critical work was done*. In their second edition, the Elzevir brothers alluded to “the text now received by all” and hence the term Textus Receptus (Received Text) originated and has stuck.

Segraves' Rejoinder

As far as the order in which the historical developments took place, I have nothing about which to quibble with White. But he is speaking of the Received Text only as the ultimate text produced by the Elzevirs, while I am speaking of it in a broader sense as that text represented by the vast Majority Text. This is not uncommon:

The terms Koine, Traditional, Majority, Byzantine, Antiochian, Syrian, and Received are all words which have come to be used in describing the same text. They speak of the text represented by some 90% of the extant MSS. So, in this sense, the Received Text was not produced by the historical events he has described; the historical events merely served as a vehicle to bring the Received Text into print.

Concerning White's claim that "little revision or serious critical work was done" during this time, further information should be given. First, it was a definite plus that the critical theories of W-H had not yet developed. In that sense, nothing was done. That is, none of those responsible for these printings were of the opinion that the shorter reading and the harder reading is preferable. They did not do critical work based on what they thought the scribe might have done. This does not mean that no critical work was done, however. Nor does it mean that the work that was done was not "serious." For instance:

Erasmus did not leave his critical work with the successful publication of 1516. In his second edition in 1519 he introduced four hundred alterations. He used additional manuscripts, including a Latin manuscript, Codex Aureus, loaned to him by the King of Hungary; two manuscripts from the Austin Priory or Corverdonk; and a Greek manuscript borrowed from the Monastery of Mount St. Agnes.⁵²

But these historical developments have nothing to do with the issue at hand. The question is: Which text is the Word of God, the Majority Text, or the critical text of W-H, etc. Burgon puts it well:

The one great Fact, which especially troubles him [Hort]

and his joint Editor—(as well it may)—is *The Traditional Greek Text* of the New Testament Scriptures. Call this Text Erasmian or Complutensian,—the text of Stephens, or of Beza, or of the Elzevirs,—call it the “Received,” or the *Traditional Greek Text*, or whatever other name you please;—the fact remains, that a Text has come down to us which is attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Versions, ancient Fathers. This, at all events, is a point on which (happily) there exists entire conformity of opinion between Dr. Hort and ourselves. Our Readers cannot have yet forgotten his virtual admission that,—*Beyond all question the Textus Receptus is the dominant Graeco-Syrian Text of A.D. 350 to A.D. 400.*⁵⁴

White's Response

(White here includes a chart to show the historical development described in his last response. I do not think it necessary to reproduce it.)

The Received Text, then, was *NOT* originally developed from the “vast, overwhelming majority of the ancient manuscripts.” In fact, it was not based on the most ancient manuscripts at all, but only the few then available ones which were largely Byzantine. It may agree with the manuscripts in the Byzantine family which were later discovered and classified, but these are universally regarded as the poorest of the four families.

Segraves' Rejoinder

White can say this only if he has proved his point before this. He has not. The number of MSS available to Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and the Elzevirs is, as I have previously said, beside the point.

It is a fact, denied by none, that the type of text found in the Greek texts printed by the above is attested to by the "vast, overwhelming majority of ancient manuscripts." And, by now, the reader will know that White's assertion that the MSS of the Byzantine family are "universally regarded as the poorest of the four families" is simply untrue. Naturally those who hold to the W-H theory think they are the poorest; what else could they think? But that view is by no means "universal." Increasingly, the W-H view is being discredited and modified. A simple instance is that many scholars now fail to see four families, as we have already discussed. Some see three; some see only two.

White's Response

As to the ratio of manuscripts in agreement with the King James Version (999 to 1), it should be remembered that of the four to five thousand New Testament manuscripts which scholars may appeal to, the majority are of the later, Byzantine family. Thus, though quoting such a ratio may be impressive to one unfamiliar with the true state of affairs, it does not appear convincing when one realizes that eight or ten high-quality older manuscripts would be worth a great deal more than eighty, a hundred or even a thousand conflated Byzantine texts of a later date.

Segraves' Rejoinder

First, note that White does not deny the ratio. Second, he admits that the majority of extant MSS are of the Byzantine family. We have already proved that the Byzantine family cannot be said, with any historical certainty, to be later. Remember, each later MSS

represents an earlier. Van Bruggen pointed out the great copying of old uncials into the minuscule form in the ninth century. Every minuscule in existence represents a MS older than itself. Since the exemplars were destroyed, we do not know how old any one of them may have been. Byzantine readings are increasingly found, even in Egypt, the further back we go!

In the latter part of his response above, White repeats the error of modern textual critics who take all the thousands of Byzantine MSS, lump them together, and reduce them to one vote. In his view, ten “high-quality” older MSS (is he including as “high-quality” B and Aleph, with their admitted carelessness, sloppiness, omissions, etc.? If not, could he name *one* “high-quality” MS that is of such stature as to offset the witness of *one thousand*?) are worth *one thousand* “conflated” Byzantine texts.

We have already proved that the issue of “conflation” is a pseudo-issue. Hort produced a grand total of *eight* examples, after which he termed the whole Byzantine text as “conflate.” Van Bruggen has pointed out that just as many could be produced to show it is *not* conflate, and that, indeed, it is the Minority Text that is conflate. So what White’s last response can be reduced to is this: He believes the critical text of W-H is closer to the Word of God than the Majority Text. He believes it represents an earlier text than the Majority Text. As he has graciously extended the right to me, I will extend it to him: It is his right to believe what he wishes, *but he has proved nothing!*

White’s Response

It eludes me how the martyrdoms of the Waldensians could testify either to the inferiority or superiority of the King James Version. With all due regard for these precious people, their mention here appears to be an emotional ploy.

Segraces' Rejoinder

This is another response of White's which causes me to wonder if he has read the books of Dr. Fuller. For in *Which Bible?* Fuller includes a reprint of the book by Benjamin G. Wilkinson, Ph. D., in which Wilkinson devotes twenty-one pages to precisely this subject. It would appear to me that if White had actually read the work, whether he agreed with it or not, he would at least be familiar with the claim. As it is, it "eludes" him how the martyrdoms of the Waldenses have anything to do with the subject at hand. In an effort to clear up the issue, I will quote from Wilkinson. But I urge both White and all others interested in this subject to study Wilkinson's entire thesis carefully.

The type of Bible selected by Constantine has held the dominating influence at all times in the history of the Catholic Church. This Bible was different from the Bible of the Waldenses, and, as a result of this difference, the Waldenses were the object of hatred and cruel persecution. . . . The Italic, the earlier Latin, was their own Bible, the one for which they lived and suffered and died. . . .

. . . The messengers of God who carried manuscripts from the churches of Judea to the churches of northern Italy and on, brought to the forerunners of the Waldenses a Bible different from the Bible of Roman Catholicism, . . . the pre-Waldensian Christians of northern Italy could not have had doctrines purer than Rome unless their Bible was purer than Rome's; that is, their Bible was not of Rome's falsified manuscripts. . . . Leger. . . noble scholar of Waldensian blood. . . the apostle of his people in the terrible massacres of 1655. . . calls Olivetan's French

Bible . . . “entire and pure,” . . . I say ‘pure’ because all the ancient exemplars, which formerly were found among the Papists, were full of falsifications, which caused Beza to say in his book on Illustrious Men, in the chapter on the Vaudois, that one must confess it was by means of the Vaudois of the Valleys that France today has the Bible in her own language. . . .” Their Bible was of the family of the renowned Itala. It was that translation into Latin which represents the Received Text. . . . Of the purity and reliability of this version, Augustine, speaking of different Latin Bibles (about 400 A.D.) says: “Now among translations themselves the Italian (Itala) is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clearness of expression.”

The old Waldensian liturgy which they used in their services down through the centuries contained “texts of Scripture of the ancient Version called the Italick.” . . . The Latin Bible, the Italic, was translated from the Greek not later than 157 A.D. . . . As Beza astonishes and confounds the world by restoring manuscripts of that Greek New Testament from which the King James is translated, Diodati takes the same and translates into Italian a new and famous edition, adopted and circulated by the Waldenses.

Leger, the Waldensian historian of his people, studied under Diodati at Geneva. He returned as pastor to the Waldenses and led them in their flight from the terrible massacre of 1655. He prized as his choicest treasure the Diodati Bible, the only worldly possession he was able to preserve. . . .

At the same time another group of scholars, bitterly hostile to the first group, were gathered at Rheims, France.

There the Jesuits, assisted by Rome and backed by all the power of Spain, brought forth an English translation of the Vulgate. In its preface they expressly declared that the Vulgate had been translated in 1300 into Italian and in 1400 into French, "the sooner to shake out of the deceived people's hands, the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses." . . . So the Vulgate was Rome's corrupt Scriptures against the Received Text; but the Received Text the New Testament of the apostles, of the Waldenses, and of the Reformers.

That Rome in early days corrupted the manuscripts while the Italic Church handed them down in their apostolic purity, Allix, the renowned scholar, testifies. He reports the following as Italic articles of faith: "They receive only, saith he, what is written in the Old and New Testament. They say, that the Popes of Rome, and other priests, have depraved the Scriptures by their doctrines and glosses."

It is recognized that the Itala was translated from the Received Text (Syrian, Hort calls it); that the Vulgate is the Itala with the readings of the Received Text removed.⁴⁴

In support of his view, Wilkinson quotes Swete, Hort, Burdon, Miller, Moore, Stanley, Clarke, Jacobus, Fulton, Von Dobschütz, Andrews and Conradi, Neander, Gilly, Comba, De Sanctis, Allix, and other scholars. I did not mention the Waldenses as an emotional ploy, but as an historical fact.

White's Response

To say that the King James Version agrees with the Codex Alex-

andrinus is something less than the full picture as well. True, Codex Alexandrinus (Codex A) reaches back to the fifth century, but it must be remembered that it is itself a Byzantine text and so may not be referred to as though it were completely different from other Byzantine texts.¹⁵ Also, it must be remembered that both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are from the fourth century, and thus roughly a century earlier than Alexandrinus.¹⁶

¹⁵Greenlee, p. 117.

¹⁶Bruce, p. 183.

Segraves' Rejoinder

Here, I must repeat that White's preconception that Byzantine readings are late, causes him to reject those MSS in which they are contained, regardless of how early they are. This is circular reasoning. The papyri, earlier than the fourth century, contain readings identified as Byzantine. On what basis will they be rejected?

The Article

Actually, the *Text of Stephens* served as the basis for the Authorized Version. And, as the brilliant attorney Philip Mauro has said, "the comparative excellency of the *Text of Stephens*. . . is due in no small degree to the fact that in its composition the *Vatican* and *Sinaitic* MSS. were not consulted."

White's Response

The Received Text, based on the work of Stephanus and Beza, became the Greek text from which the King James Version was

translated. In spite of Philip Mauro's opinion concerning its "comparative excellence," (and it must be conceded that Mauro, while a fine minister, was no textual scholar), it retained the arbitrary nature of Erasmus' work and the weakness of being grounded in largely only one family of texts, the weakest one—Byzantine. Naturally, the Text of Stephens did not consult either Codex Vaticanus or Codex Sinaiticus, for Codex Vaticanus was not released for scholarly study by the Vatican until the 1800s and Codex Sinaiticus was not even discovered yet.¹⁷

¹⁷Griessler and Nix, pp. 271-273.

Segraces' Rejoinder

Philip Mauro, in the words of Gardiner, "readily admitted that he was not a theological or linguistic scholar, but he has demonstrated. . .the fact that any layman who applies himself assiduously to such a subject can secure an overall picture of just what has gone on over the past century since 1881 by way of 'holding down the truth in unrighteousness' and perverting it to suit the whims and fancies of scholars who refuse to hold the Bible for what it claims to be. . .".¹⁸

Indeed, one does not have to be a textual scholar to see the fallacies in the W-H theory. Mauro was a keen attorney. His skill at reasoning and logic caused him to see the foolishness of modern textual criticism.

White has yet to prove that Erasmus' work was "arbitrary" or "weak." True, it was grounded in largely only one family of texts, the Byzantine. To those who are not taken in by W-H's theoretical reconstruction of textual transmission, this is a plus, not a minus. The Byzantine text is not the "weakest" one; that is a matter of opinion, and an opinion, I think, we have disproved.

Mauro was not so ignorant as to think that B and Aleph were

available for the Text of Stephens. He was merely saying that it was a good thing B and Aleph were not allowed to corrupt the text.

The Article

And what do you suppose the latest archeological discoveries have revealed? Simply that copies of scripture even more ancient than [sic] any of the codices previously mentioned are in astounding agreement with the Word of God as found in our King James Version!

White's Response

Finally, what about our latest archeological discoveries? Since the article does not choose to reveal its sources for such information (except the annotation at the end concerning the books by David Fuller), and inasmuch as the opinions expressed in the article are not to be commonly found in contemporary textual scholarship, it is difficult to judge such a nebulous statement. Several problems arise when one attempts to defend the King James Version on the basis of archaeology. Foremost among these is the problem that since the King James Version is less than four hundred years old, biblical archaeology does not even address itself to that time period. It is more probable that what the author has in mind is that archaeology continues to uncover artifacts and information that enhances the credibility of the Bible itself. Yet if that is so, then no case can be made out for the King James Version per se. What would apply to the King James Version would equally apply to all versions. To my knowledge, there is no recent discovery in archaeology which in any way even relates to the theory of the priority of the King James Version, the Received Text, the Byzantine family, etc.

Segraces' Rejoinder

I did not say that archeology has anything to do with the KJV itself; I said that the "latest archeological discoveries have revealed. . .that copies of scripture even more ancient than any of the codices previously mentioned are in astounding agreement with the Word of God as found in our King James Version." In other words, archaeological discoveries are proving that the *text* upon which the KJV is based is the correct text.

At this point, evidently because we have been discussing the Greek text of the New Testament at such length, White seems to have forgotten that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is questioned by modern textual scholars as well. My comment about archaeological discoveries had to do primarily with the Masoretic Text upon which the Old Testament of the KJV is based. Scholars from W-H on have not been content to accept this text, but have practiced their textual criticism upon it as well as upon the Greek of the New Testament.

Witness, for example, Moffatt:

. . .The traditional or "masoretic" text of the Old Testament. . .is often desperately corrupt. . .At. . .points it is in such disrepair that no conjecture can heal it. . .wherever I was satisfied with some correction or conjecture which at least made tolerable sense, I preferred to adopt it. When the choice lay between a guess or a gap, I inclined to prefer the former, feeling that the ordinary reader for whom this version is designed would have a proper dislike of gaps. . .Nearly every page contains some emendation of the traditional text. . .how uncertain and precarious is the traditional text of some books in the Old Testament. . .the books of the Old Testament are, for the most part, books which

have been either made out of books or edited more or less drastically by later hands.⁵⁷

Even the NIV followed readings other than those found in the Masoretic Text.⁵⁸ So did the RSV, saying of the Masoretic text, “Sometimes it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission, but none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgments of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text.”⁵⁹ I think it safe to say that you will find *all* of the modern versions making “conjectural emendations” (guesses) in “correcting” the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

But recent archaeological discoveries have confirmed that the Masoretic Text, currently in use and upon which the KJV Old Testament was based, is extremely ancient. A specific example I had in mind when writing the article was that of Yigael Yadin, the great Jewish archaeologist. Here, in Yadin’s own words, is the story of the discovery of ancient MSS on the mountaintop fortress of Masada:

About three feet away from the shekels the first scroll was found. All the details of this discovery are sharp in my mind. In the early hours of the afternoon, while I was in one of the northern storerooms, Shmaryahu Guttman came running to me, followed by some of the volunteers working with him, and flourished before me a piece of parchment. It was so black and creased that only with difficulty could one make anything out. But a quick examination on the spot showed us immediately that here was a fragment from the *Book of Psalms*, and we could even identify the chapters: the section ran Psalm 81 to Psalm 85.

A little while later we also found another part of the scroll, which completed the top part of the first fragment. . . .

This discovery is of extraordinary importance for scroll research. It is not only that this is the first time that a parchment scroll has been found not in a cave, and in circumstances where it was possible to date it without the slightest doubt. It could not possibly be later than the year 73 AD, the year Masada fell. As a matter of fact, this scroll was written much before—perhaps twenty or thirty years earlier; and it is interesting that THIS SECTION FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS, LIKE THE OTHER BIBLICAL SCROLLS WHICH WE FOUND LATER, IS ALMOST EXACTLY IDENTICAL (except for a few minor changes here and there) to the text of the biblical books which we use today. Even the division into chapters and psalms is identical with the traditional division. . . .

On the very first day of the second season, early in the afternoon, it fell to a young lad from a *kibbutz* in Western Galilee to discover in the western corner of the court in front of the large wall, fragments of a scroll scattered among the ruins. This discovery provoked great excitement and was taken as a happy omen for our future work. Parts of the fragments had been eaten away, but those that were undamaged were very well preserved and we could immediately identify them as several chapters from the *Book of Leviticus*, chapters eight to twelve, and to note that THIS SCROLL TOO WAS ABSOLUTELY IDENTICAL WITH THE TRADITIONAL TEXT of *Leviticus*. Moreover, there was the same division into sections, the traditional division into “open” and “closed” ones, that is, sections which begin after an empty line-space at the end of the previous one, and those which begin after

a small line space in the same line.

How this scroll reached this location we shall never know. Maybe it was blown here by the wind during the destruction of Masada and was buried among the ruined debris; or perhaps it was thrown here by one of the Roman soldiers. At all events, its discovery here might be called an archaeological "miracle"....

...Within a few hours he had reached almost to the bottom of the pit and there his groping hands found the remains of a scroll. Though the parchment was badly gnawed, we could immediately identify the writing as chapters from the *Book of Ezekiel*; and the parts that were better preserved than others, and which we could easily read, contained extracts from Chapter 37—the vision of the dry bones.

As for the rolled scroll discovered in the first pit, it was found on opening—which had to be done with great care in the laboratory in Jerusalem—to contain parts of the two final chapters of the *Book of Deuteronomy*. But the tightly rolled core of the scroll, on which we had pinned much hope, turned out to our dismay to be simply the blank end "sheets" of the scroll. They had been sewn to the written "sheets" to facilitate rolling and unrolling.

It need hardly be added at this stage that THESE TWO SCROLLS, too, ARE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THE TRADITIONAL BIBLICAL TEXTS. There are only a few slight changes in the *Ezekiel* scroll.⁶⁰ (Capitals mine.)

The import of this discovery can hardly be overlooked. These are scrolls definitely dating *no later than* 73 A.D., but more likely 43-53 A.D. The text in them is VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL, EVEN

TO SPACINGS, WITH OUR PRESENT TRADITIONAL TEXT!
(Traditional text and Masoretic text are synonymous.) These would have been the same type of texts used by Jesus Christ Himself; thus His divine stamp of approval is upon the text as we have it today! This, of course, destroys the skepticism of Moffatt, the NIV and RSV translators, et al. The Hebrew text upon which our KJV is based is the same as that used by Jesus Christ!

The brilliant Robert Dick Wilson spent much of his lifetime in defense of the traditional text of the Old Testament. Some of his work may be seen in his books, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* and *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* Wilson, who was fluent in forty-five languages, assured us that there is not a page of our Old Testament about which we need have any doubt (contrast this with Moffatt's claim to its corruptness). He proved that the Hebrew scribes preserved, with astounding accuracy, even the names of kings and cities.

There is, however, even a bit of archaeological evidence concerning New Testament MSS that contradicts the theories of modern textual critics, from Hort on. O'Callaghan has identified a papyrus fragment from Qumran (7Q5) with Mark 6:52-53. While this is too minute a fragment to establish a text-type, it does establish the weakness of the argument that early Christians did not view the apostolic writings and the writings of the disciples as Scripture.⁸¹

So, indeed, as I have said, "the latest archaeological discoveries have revealed. . .that copies of scripture even more ancient than any of the codices previously mentioned are in astounding agreement with the Word of God as found in our King James Version!"

White's Response

In conclusion to this section, it can only be admitted that the

idea of the King James Version being “based upon the finest ancient manuscripts” is a non-valid opinion which is not generally shared by the scholarly world of textual criticism. To hold such an opinion is certainly no crime, but to set forth such an opinion as though it were backed by the most trustworthy scholarship is deceptive. At the very best, it is a minority opinion which is rejected by almost all textual scholars. As Greenlee points out in regard to one of the very few recent works which takes this view, Edward Hills’ book *The King James Version Defended*,¹⁸ “the author states his case well, but his work can hardly become more than a scholarly curiosity.”¹⁹

¹⁸Des Moines, Iowa: Christian Research Press, 1956.

¹⁹Greenlee, P. 82.

Segraves’ Rejoinder

White says that the only thing left for us is to admit that the thesis of my article is “a non-valid opinion.” I hardly think this is the case. The facts, I believe, speak for themselves.

Now he returns to his opening argument that my view is “not generally shared” and “is rejected by almost all.” As we have already seen, this proves absolutely nothing. We could quote the majority of scholars on the side of many issues which have subsequently proved to be wrong.

In view of White’s diligent response to my article, I am somewhat surprised that he quotes Greenlee’s brief dismissal of Hills’ thorough work. It would appear to me that White would recognize that Greenlee’s casual and patronizing treatment of Hills does nothing to answer the arguments put forth by Hills. Greenlee could only say Hills work “can hardly beeome more than a scholarly curiosi-ty” if he had responded, point by point, to Hills. He does nothing of the kind. It also appears that White is not familiar with the

new edition (1973) of Hills work, which consists of some 280 pages of detailed information supporting his view. Would Greenlee call the work of van Bruggen or Pickering "scholarly curiosities"? Surely White can see that this is simply the empty dismissal of a man who is convinced that his view is right and that any other view is not even worth responding to. (Indeed, even Burgon's massive works have never been responded to in any detailed fashion by modern textual critics.)

The Article

2. It was translated by the most capable scholars, who believed in the integrity of God's Word.

Next in importance to which manuscripts form the basis for a translation, is the matter of who is going to do the translating. The 47 men who labored on the Authorized Version were the most eminent scholars of that day, and, in fact, probably of any day. Contrary to the practice of a fellow taking some courses in Hebrew and Greek and deciding to enrich the world's knowledge with his own personal version of God's eternal Word, here was a group of the most learned men of that or any generation who lent all their accumulated expertise to the project, and who operated under the most exacting and precise arrangements to insure accuracy. It has been suggested, and I agree, that today it would be virtually impossible to duplicate the total quantity and quality of knowledge as was represented by that body. Besides their academic credentials, which were awesome, these men were believers in God, and in His Word, and in the sacredness of their task.

White's Response

We move now to the subject of the King James Version itself as based on the Received Text. The forty-seven men who worked on what has come to be known as the Authorized Version were indeed eminent scholars. Their credentials were excellent and can in no way be discounted simply because they used a popular but somewhat inferior text. The suggestion that they were the most eminent group of scholars "of any day" is overly ambitious, and the opinion that "today it would be virtually impossible to duplicate the total quantity and quality of (their) knowledge" may be passed over since it can in no way be proved or disproved.

Segraves' Rejoinder

White admits the translators of the KJV were eminent scholars. On this we agree. But his characterization of the text used by them as "inferior" is not proven. That is his *opinion*. I have offered facts to the contrary. His next sentence is a paradox, for he says, on the one hand, my statement that they were the most eminent "of any day" is overly ambitious, and on the other hand, that there is no way to prove whether we could duplicate the total quantity and quality of their knowledge.

Contrary to the misinformed view of some, we *do* know who the men were who translated the KJV, and we do know both their academic and spiritual backgrounds. Terence H. Brown has provided a thumbnail sketch of both in Fuller's *Which Bible?* Gustavus Paine has done the same in his book, *The Men Behind the King James Version*, though Paine is not nearly as concerned about the spiritual aspects as we would be. I have dealt with a small part of this on pages 136 through 143.

White's Response

There seems to be a bit of maliciousness, however, in the implication that modern versions are merely "the practice of a fellow taking some courses in Hebrew and Greek and deciding to enrich the world's knowledge with his own version of God's eternal word." Exactly what the author has in mind with this veiled allusion is questionable, but if he means such works as The New International Version, The New American Standard Bible, The American Standard Version, The Revised Standard Version, The New English Bible, Moffat's [sic] translation, to name a few of the better ones, then he had best do some more homework. These and other translations have been made under equally exacting specifications by men with impeccable academic, as well as pietistic, credentials, recognized scholars who affirm the final authority and infallibility of Scripture and who were convinced of the sacredness of their task.

Segraves' Rejoinder

Would White accuse Augustine of maliciousness? Augustine wrote, "In the earliest days of the faith whenever any Greek codex fell into the hands of anyone who thought that he had a slight familiarity with Greek and Latin, he was bold enough to attempt to make a translation."¹² While I do not know anyone personally who, after taking a few Hebrew and Greek courses, has actually published his own version of the Bible, I know for a fact that many young students and preachers take such courses and then proceed, from the pulpit, to give their people the vast benefit of their learning by "correcting" the KJV. This amounts to the same thing. A man doesn't have to print a Bible to have his own version. This is no new thing; an example is seen from the days of the King James Version itself:

An interesting story is found in Walton's biography of Bishop Sanderson illustrating the truth of the old proverb, "a little learning is a dangerous thing." Dr. Kilbye, an excellent Hebrew scholar and Professor of this language at the university, also expert in Greek and chosen as one of the translators, went on a visit with Sanderson, and at church on Sunday they heard a young preacher waste a great amount of the time allotted for his sermon in criticizing several words in the then recent translation. He carefully showed how one particular word should have been translated in a different way. Later that evening the preacher and the learned strangers were invited together to a meal, and Dr. Kilbye took the opportunity to tell the preacher that he could have used his time more profitably. The Doctor then explained that the translators had very carefully considered the "three reasons" given by the preacher, but they had found another thirteen more weighty reasons for giving the rendering complained of by the young critic.⁶³

Only God knows how much damage is done by those with a "little learning" sowing doubts in the minds of people about God's Holy Word. How presumptuous it is for a Hebrew or Greek student to confidently assert that the translators of the KJV, with their incomparable backgrounds in linguistics, their knowledge of multitudes of languages, and the pooled resources of *all* the learned men of that time, were in error here or there.

Frankly, I am astounded by White's next claim. He says that modern translations are made "under equally exacting specifications by men with impeccable academic, as well as pietistic, credentials, recognized scholars who affirmed the *final authority* and

infallibility of Scripture and who were convinced of the sacredness of their task." Included in this group he has The New English Bible, Moffatt's, and Phillips? I cannot bring myself to believe that White has actually studied the pietistic backgrounds of the translators of these, and other, versions. I cannot believe he has read their own words as to their view of Biblical inspiration and the "final authority and infallibility of Scripture."

No less a scholar than Oswald T. Allis has pointed out that the Revised Standard Version, so highly touted by White, is, without question, a liberal version, because its translators had a "lax and 'liberal' attitude to the question of the plenary, verbal inspiration and the divine authority of Scripture." (See page 169.)

The American Standard Version had as the chairman of both committees of revision Dr. Philip Schaff. No less an authority than the *Princeton Review* identified Schaff as "an apostle of modern Gnosticism". (See page 159.) This is the man who was so happy among the Buddhists, Confucianists, and Shintoists, that he was willing to die among them! (See page 169.) The American Standard Version is, of course, simply the Revised Version of 1881 with a few minor changes to suit the American language. And we have well documented the absolute lack of orthodoxy on the part of Westcott and Hort, the two principle members of the RV committee, and upon whose text the New Testament of the RV was based. Both were sympathetic with the Roman Catholic Church and Darwin's theory of evolution. (See pages 18 through 21.) Neither believed the Bible was infallible, or the final authority.

Can White be serious about including The New English Bible in this list? Its Vice-Chairman and Director, who kept the whole project under his "watchful eye," C. H. Dodd, makes no bones about his lack of belief in the inspiration of the Bible. (See pages 183 through 186.) He says it is a "hopeless position" and suggests that even the sayings of Jesus "simply are not true."

And Moffatt! He who said of the difficulties of the translator, "But once the translator. . . is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration, these difficulties cease to be so formidable." (See page 171.) Surely White has not read the Introduction to Moffatt's translation!

What of Phillips? He subscribes to the work of C. H. Dodd and believes Matthew is the result of the Q document. (See page 186.)

The New American Standard Bible is simply an update of the American Standard Version. I have discussed this at length on pages 171 through 181. Regardless of how pietistic its translators may have been, they were working with the same text and translation that came from the hands of Westcott, Hort, and even the Unitarian Smith!

I dealt with The New International Version on pages 181 and 182. The difference between the text upon which it is based, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and that of the RSV, ASV, RV, NEB, etc., would not fill a thimble. The translators may have been ever so devout, but they worked with a text created as they went along (eclectic), a text which comes out in basic agreement with B and Aleph, which are in fact obviously corrupt.

Weymouth is simply another translation in keeping with Moffatt, Phillips, Goodspeed, etc. There is not enough difference in any of them to quibble about.

Now White says these are "a few of the *better* translations"! Indeed, those he has listed represent the finest modern textual criticism has to offer. They come up woefully lacking, not only in matters of text, both of Old Testament and New Testament, but in the personal spiritual qualifications of the translators.

I must humbly suggest, and I do so without rancor, that it is White who "had best do some more homework."

The Article

Compare that with the group who translated the so-called Revised Version (Actually it wasn't "revised" at all, but based on a completely new text invented by Drs. Westcott and Hort, two members of the committee). The translation committee included a Unitarian minister, a matter over which some of the sincere Bible-believing scholars quit in disgust. One of the true Christian men left, Dr. Scrivener, was consistently out-voted as he tried, time and again, to salvage what he saw was destined to be a horrendous travesty upon Christianity. In his most charitable moments, one could call neither Westcott nor Hort a fundamental Christian.

White's Response

Before moving too quickly to the Revised Version of 1881, a glance at the facts surrounding the production of the King James Version and the textual critical progresses of the intervening time period between it and the work of the Revised Version is in order if one is to properly "compare" the two.²⁰

²⁰This section on the KJV follows, in general, the discussion by Geisler and Nix, but, in any case, it is well-known ground to the student of the making of the English Bible.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I have devoted Chapter Five to the development of the KJV. See pages 133 through 152.

White's Response

The King James Version of 1611 was the brainchild of James VI of Scotland who became James I of England when he ascended [sic] to the English throne. One of his first acts as the new king was to convene a conference at Hampton Court of clergymen and theologians to examine things "amiss in the church." The background for this summons included the Millenary Petition, a document he had received en route to London from Scotland. In it were the complaints of the Puritan party with about a thousand signatures. The Puritans exerted a considerable amount of influence in England, and James could hardly afford to ignore them, although he treated them with general contempt at the conference. Nevertheless, when the Puritan president suggested producing an authorized version of the English Bible acceptable to all parties in the English church, James recognized a golden opportunity. First, it would give him the political advantage of having the populace regard him as the keeper of religious peace, a fact which was more elaborately written out in the opening paragraph of the King James Version introduction.²¹ Secondly, it gave him the excuse he needed to replace the two most popular versions of the English Bible (the Bishop's Bible and the Geneva Bible), popular among the people, but not so popular with James inasmuch as some of the notes accompanying the text seemed to undermine his conviction that "kings were appointed by God and had a divine right to rule their people." At any rate, in the midst of such political intrigue a committee of scholars was selected, the text divided up into sections, and the work carried out.

²¹This introduction may still be found in some modern KJV editions, especially those printed in England (cf. Oxford, World, etc.).

Segraves' Rejoinder

As with Erasmus, the detractors from the KJV delight in speaking disparagingly of King James. He certainly had his faults. Who doesn't? But in so doing, those skeptical of the KJV entirely miss the point. We are not discussing personalities, but texts. What King James may or may not have been has absolutely no bearing on the translation which issued forth from the hands of the translators.

But some corrections are in order. The KJV was not the "brain-child of James." If anything, it was the "brainchild" of the Puritans. It was they who petitioned for a new translation to combat the evils of the new Roman Catholic version, and to clear up some of the minor difficulties in previous versions, such as marginal readings. Statements like "James recognized a golden opportunity," "political advantage," "excuse be needed," and "political intrigue," make it seem that White has every bit as much a "penchant for allusion and innuendo" as I do with my "hoopla"!

White's Response

Two facts stand out in this history which are not commonly known, at least by the layperson. First, the King James Version is not, in a perfect sense, a new translation at all but a revision, and secondly, although commonly called the Authorized Version, it was never authorized. Actually, the King James Version was produced as a revision made by comparing it with other already existing English translations (Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whiteburche's, the Geneva Bible and possibly the Rheims New Testament which later became part of the Douai Version—the accepted Roman Catholic Bible). Thus, if the truth is to be pointed out, what is called the King James Version and the Authorized Version is not a version

at all; it is simply a scholarly revision. Even the original title page of the 1611 edition spells this out clearly. Although it gradually replaced the Bishop's Bible in public use (and not without a great deal of public resistance²²), there was no formal appointment of it as "authorized" by the King, Parliament or any one else. Ironically, this is really the third so-called "Authorized Bible" to appear in print. In the long run, however, its merit as a superior work to its predecessors brought it to dominance in the English world.

²²One scholar of the time remarked that he "had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses, than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor churches" (quoted from F.F. Bruce, p. 229). Two modern scholars from Baylor University point out, "This translation (KJV) was considered heretical and received poor initial acceptance." Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr. and Bruce C. Cresson, *Introduction to the Bible* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), p. 8,9.

Segraves' Rejoinder

As will be seen by reading my chapter on the KJV, it is indeed the case that it was the crowning fruit of the Bibles of the Reformation era. It is said that about 95% of the KJV is Tyndale. This detracts from the KJV not at all. Rather, it strengthens its position. All of the previous English translations (with the exception of Rheims) spoken of were from the Majority Text (and I know the individual translators didn't have a majority of the MSS before them as they translated; they didn't need all the MSS, they had their representatives). All of the finest efforts of the men before them were incorporated into the KJV. Their purpose, according to Miles Smith, was not to make an entirely new translation, but to make a good one better.

The second point White makes concerning the authorization of the Authorized Version, is one that is often made by those who would detract from the KJV. Indeed, he has followed them precisely to the point of mentioning other "authorized" versions. This seems

to me to be the fallacious line of reasoning that if we succeed in belittling one thing, we thus exalt another. It is true that there is no record of the King of Parliament "authorizing" the KJV. But of what importance is that? Would their authorization have made it more or less accurate? As White has pointed out, other versions have been authorized, but did that make them any better or worse? Yet, and note this carefully, the King James Version is the Authorized Version. How can I say that? The *true* authorization of a translation is not in the decree of a King or the vote of a Parliament, but in the use of the translation by the humble, common believer! How can we account for the fact that the KJV has been, without question, *the* Bible for nearly 400 years (even White admits it is still most familiar) if it has not received some kind of "authorization"?

White also casts a question over the KJV by mentioning the Rheims New Testament. And I certainly do not deny that it was before the translators. But isn't it interesting to note that the Roman Catholic Church rejects the KJV, while it accepts some of the new translations, even going so far as to place its official stamp of approval upon them (e.g. TEV)?

If, as White has said, the KJV is not a version at all, then neither is the RV, the ASV, the RSV, or the NASB, for they are all supposedly revisions of what has gone before. He seems to try to disparage the KJV by such remarks, but he must remember they apply to others as well.

Concerning the "great deal of public resistance," I am somewhat amused to note that White refers to the same tired quote from a man who said he would rather be torn apart by wild horses than to approve the KJV. I have read this previously; it seems to be about the only evidence the detractors from the KJV can come up with to support their claim. I wonder why White didn't tell us who the scholar was (Dr. Hugh Broughton) and continue with his quote

to include Bruce's next sentence ("Broughton had not served on the panel of translators, for all his scholarship; he was not much of a team-worker."⁶⁴ It seems as if Broughton may have had an "axe to grind." White says the KJV managed to win out "in the long run." That "long run" was about twenty to fifty years. Now consider this, a new Bible comes on the scene, and in from twenty to fifty years only, the great majority of Christian people have laid down their other translations, including the Geneva Bible, to take up the new! Such a phenomenon has never been repeated since, even with millions of dollars worth of publicity and Madison Avenue techniques.

White's Response

Though the King James Version was dominant for the next 300 years, it must not be thought that textual criticism fell into limbo.²³

²³The following area of discussion follows Greenlee and Geisler and Nix.

Segraves' Rejoinder

A correction is in order: The KJV is *still* dominant, and the four hundredth year is quickly approaching. As to what textual criticism "fell into," I will let the reader decide.

White's Response

The same desire to piece together the most accurate Greek text possible, which desire originally had led to the Received Text, continued to propel scholars forward in their efforts to match the autographs as closely as possible.

Segraces' Rejoinder

White has put it nicely, and very accurately, with his descriptive "piece together." This is exactly what eclecticism is all about, and it can do nothing else than produce a brand new text every time it is used. In other words, depending upon who is doing the "piecing," a different text comes out every time! Can we believe this is the way God chose to preserve His Holy Word for us?

But the last part of White's statement is not correct. The "piecing together" of the Received Text and the eclecticism of the current texts are two entirely different things. Remember: The Received Text is the text reflected in some 90% of the extant MSS. These MSS agree with each other. How much "piecing" do you have to do when you already have harmony and agreement? But the current Greek texts are based upon a handful MSS which disagree among themselves. These texts are *created* texts; they never existed in that form anywhere, in any MS. By "piecing together" a little from here, a bit from there, the editors of the present Greek texts have succeeded in producing a hitherto unknown text.

White's Response

It was not that the Received Text was bad or misleading, for it did not differ from the other texts sufficiently to bring into question any basic tenet of the Christian faith.

Segraces' Rejoinder

This is a standard argument for the school of thought to which White has attached himself, and I have dealt with it on pages 66

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through 89. How can he say the received text was not "had or misleading," if—as he believes—it includes thousands of errors, and words, verses, and passages which are not even the Word of God? On the pages mentioned above, we have shown how, in a very few limited instances, the new versions, based on current texts, bring basic tenets of the Christian faith into question. This could be multiplied many, many times over.

White's Response

It was simply that the Received Text was quite obviously "far from the original text."²⁴

²⁴Greenlee, p. 72.

Segraves' Rejoinder

If this is so, is its familiarity sufficient to override the fact that it is in error? Is that why White continues to "use" it? It would appear to me that if a person honestly believed it was far from the original text, and if he believed the Scriptural warnings against adding to or taking away, he would have to put the KJV aside, be done with it for once and for all, and use the text he believed nearer the original.

White's Response

Nor yet was it that the King James Version lacked respectability. The rapidly changing English language and the discovery of increasingly more textual evidence brought to light the need for serious and careful revision. Between 1633 and 1830, a whole list of scholars such as John Mill, Richard Bentley, J. A. Bengel, John

Wettstein, Johann Semler and Johann Griesbach were instrumental in discovering, collecting, examining [sic] and categorizing a host of other manuscripts. By the beginning of the 19th century, dozens of Greek manuscripts from earlier times than the Byzantine family of the Received Text were known and being studied. It was only a matter of time until serious attempts were to be made to get "back to the originals." Granted, such a desire was not always popular in view of the traditional acceptance of the Received Text, no matter how hastily it may have been assembled. Yet the conscientiousness of many scholars would not allow them to do otherwise. If tradition was to be the deciding factor, then the Protestant church was bound to return to that horrible claim of the Roman church, that is, that the church is the mother of the Bible, not vice versa. No one could claim the final authority of Scripture if he was not willing to find out exactly what that Scripture said when originally written!

Segrates' Rejoinder

I have dealt at length with the subject of the language of the KJV on pages 146 through 152. In four hundred years, the language has not changed nearly as "rapidly" as White suggests. It is true that there are today a few words we would call "archaic." This can be, and is, easily dealt with in the margins of Bibles; it does not require an entirely new translation.

White then gives a thumbnail sketch of those men involved in textual criticism who lead up to Westcott and Hort. Concerning the MSS that have been discovered since 1611, I would say that the time of the discovery is unimportant. What is important, and what White discounts, is that 90% of the extant MSS are "Byzantine" in nature.

White, who accuses me of innuendo, suggests that those who favored the KJV had no interest in the “originals,” and that perhaps they were not as “conscientious” as those who did. Rather, they believed the Received Text *did* represent the “originals.”

He also speaks again of how “hastily” the Received Text was assembled. We have already spoken to this, but I must point out here that, truly, the Received Text was the work of hundreds of years by the combined efforts countless scribes. Remember that Erasmus did not need a large number of MSS; the MSS he had represented the large number.

Next, White suggests that the only thing that is the deciding factor for the supremacy of the Received Text is tradition. He then raises the specter of the Roman church, and implies that if we believe the Received Text is nearest to the original Word of God, we are guilty of Romanizing. There is no basis for his contention. Tradition is not, as we have shown, the only deciding factor for the Received Text. As far as Romanizing tendencies are concerned, the church of Rome despises the KJV, but gladly approves of some of the new translations. Supporters of the Received Text do not believe the church is the mother of the Bible; they believe God is the *author* of the Bible, and that He preserved it providentially through the vast majority of MSS and the use of humble believers all through the centuries. But neither do we accept his alternative, i.e. that the Bible is the mother of the church. Rather, “Jerusalem which is above. . .is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26).

Then White says, “No one could claim the final authority of Scripture if he was not willing to find out exactly what that Scripture said when originally written!” I agree with his statement (not his implication, of course). But does *he* believe it? Most of the scholars he quotes have given up hope of ever finding out “exactly what that Scripture said when originally written.” They believe it is possible to *approximate* the original text, to come close to it.

But I am sure that if you asked Bruce, Greenlee, et al. whether it was possible to know for sure, beyond the shadow of a doubt, exactly what the originals said, their response would be negative.

White's Response

Between 1830 and 1882, five names are of particular significance in this textual progress: Karl Lachmann, Samuel Tregelles, Constantin Tischendorf, Brooke Foss Westcott [sic] and F. J. A. Hort. It is especially the textual theory of Westcott and Hort which has come to underlie all subsequent New Testament textual criticism. Their theory (which is summarized by Greenlee, pp. 78-81) had its opponents early on, such as Herman von Soden, a German scholar who set out to arrive at a critical text on a different basis than Westcott and Hort. However, after much expenditure, his work only confirmed many of their findings. Besides this, a last defense of the Received Text was staged by F. H. A. Scrivener, J. W. Burgon and Edward Miller. These men argued that the traditional text must have been the right one as God would not have permitted his church to follow anything else.

Segrates' Rejoinder

I agree with White's first three sentences. Also, I have dealt with von Soden's theory earlier, in conjunction with a discussion of Moffatt, who used von Soden's text in the New Testament. But I would like to point out something here about von Soden's work that seems to me an amazing, and amusing, paradox. Greenlee describes von Soden's work variously as "the greatest disappointment in modern textual criticism," "dubious," "mistaken," "not always reliable or complete," "complicated," "often simply impossible

to understand," "seems to try to draw the reader's conclusion for him," and "bewilderingly complicated"? And yet what is the final outcome of von Soden's work? Greenlee says, "One of the most significant contributions of von Soden's work is the unintentional confirmation which it furnishes to the work of W-H"!⁶⁵ How can von Soden's dubious, mistaken, unreliable, bewildering confirmation of W-H be seen as a vote for the legitimacy of W-H?

But now I begin to differ with White. Words like "last defense" and "staged" are reminiscent of my "hoopla," "esteemed," "snatched," and "perpetrate"? It is a fact that Burgon, Scrivener, and Miller's effort was not a "last defense." The defense has been carried on to this day. Burgon has never been adequately answered.

White sums up all of Scrivener's, Burgon's, and Miller's arguments in one sentence: The traditional text must have been the right one as God would not have permitted his church to follow anything else. These men certainly believed that, but their arguments were vast, reasoned, and well ordered. They quoted from hundreds of sources and demonstrated and proved their contentions. Has White read Burgon's *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Saint Mark*? What about *The Revision Revised* or *The Causes of Corruption*, etc.? His defense cannot be limited to a one sentence definition. (It is understandable, though, that White would do this, for this is the treatment accorded Burgon's massive arguments by the current textual critics.)

White's Response

Burgon predicted that subsequent scholarship would prove the inferiority of the Revised Version, but alas, subsequent scholarship

only reaffirmed the inferiority of the Byzantine text.²³

²³F.F. Bruce, p. 233.

Segrates' Rejoinder

Burton made his prediction less than 100 years ago. Since then, the RV and the ASV have fallen by the wayside. (Oh, there are efforts to "rescue" them from "inevitable demise." See my earlier discussion of the NASB.) But the King James Version just keeps on being *the* Bible. True, subsequent scholarship has not resulted in a *majority* opinion against W-H, but neither has it resulted in a total rejection of the superiority of the Received Text. But, as we have seen, whether an opinion is in the majority or not means nothing as to its accurateness.

White's Response

After the deaths of Burton and Miller, scholarly support of the Received Text ceased for all practical purposes. Today, as Geisler and Nix have pointed out,²⁴ scarcely a modern scholar seriously defends the superiority of the Received Text.

²⁴p. 392.

Segrates' Rejoinder

If no modern scholar defended the Received Text, nothing would be proved either way. A thing is not right or wrong because of what scholars say or fail to say. But the fact is, scholarly support of the Received Text has not ceased. Depending upon what White means by "all practical purposes," I suppose he could say it has ceased,

for there is, after all, only van Bruggen, Pickering, Martin, Hodges, Hills, etc. But we do not decide the issue by a majority vote of the scholars. White's repeated reference to the majority of scholarship proves nothing in and of itself.

White's Response

Although a number of unauthorized revisions were made on the King James version between 1611 and 1881,²⁷ the long sought after revision did not begin until 1871.

²⁷The revision of Dr. Blayney in 1769 which remains as the standard form to this day differed from the 1611 edition in at least 75,000 details—see: Edgar J. Goodspeed, “The Versions of the New Testament,” *Tools for Bible Study*, Palmer H. Kelly and Donald G. Miller (eds.), pp. 117, 118.

Segraves' Rejoinder

This is another of the standard efforts the detractors from the KJV make in an attempt to buttress their position. It is thought, I suppose, that those of us who defend the KJV will throw up our hands in despair to think that our present KJV is really so different from the first KJV. What are the facts of the case? Hills comments:

Opponents of the King James Version often try to refute us by asking us which edition of the King James version we receive as authoritative. For example, a professor in a well known Bible school writes as follows: “With specific reference to the King James translation, I must ask you which revision you refer to as the one to be accepted? It has been revised at least three times. The first translation

of 1611 included the Apocrypha, which I do not accept as authoritative."

This retort, however, is very weak. All the editions of the King James Version from 1611 onward are still extant and have been examined minutely by F. H. A. Scrivener and other careful scholars. Aside from printers errors, these editions differ from each other only in regard to spelling, punctuation, and, in a few places, italics. Hence any one of them may be used by a Bible-believing Christian. The fact that some of them include the Apocrypha is beside the point, since this does not affect their accuracy in the Old and New Testaments.²²

The translators of 1611 did not include the Apocrypha as Scripture, as an examination of that first edition will show. They included it purely as *the books called Apocrypha*. Miles Smith did not deal with them as Scripture in his message to the readers. But even if the translators had felt the Apocrypha was inspired (which they didn't), it would have had no bearing on the Old Testament and New Testament.

White's Response

The desire for this revision was so widespread in Protestantism, that in 1870 a Convocation of the Province of Canterbury was convened and organization of the revision process planned for. Sixty-five revisers of various denominations in Great Britain were selected and in 1871 the revision began. In 1872, a group of American scholars were [sic] added. A summary of the careful policies of revision are to be found in Geisler and Nix,²³ and these

included the stipulation that in the final revision, no change was to be made from the existing Text except by a two-thirds vote.

²⁸p. 424.

Segraves' Rejoinder

This desire for a revision, which White said was so widespread, was rejected by the Northern Convocation of the Church of England. Wilkinson puts more perspective on the efforts of a few men to initiate a revision:

The first efforts to secure revision were cautiously made in 1857 by five clergymen. . . . The triumvirate who constantly worked to bring things to a head. . . found it difficult to get the project on foot. Twice they had appealed to the Government in hopes that, as in the case of the King James of 1611, Queen Victoria would appoint a royal commission. They were refused.

There was sufficient aggression in the Southern Convocation, which represented the Southern half of the Church of England, to vote Revision. But they lacked a leader. There was no outstanding name which would suffice in the public eye as a guarantee against the possible dangers. This difficulty, however, was at last overcome when Bishop Ellicott won over "that most versatile and picturesque personality in the English Church, Samuel Wilberforce, the silver-tongued Bishop of Oxford."

He was the remaining son of the great Emancipator who was still with the Church of England; the two other sons, Henry and Robert, influenced by the Oxford Movement, had gone over to the Church of Rome. Dr. Wilber-

force had rendered great service to the English Church in securing the resurrection of the Southern Convocation, which for a hundred years had not been permitted to act. . . .

An amendment was passed to include the Old Testament. . . . This committee solicited the participation of the Northern Convocation, but they declined to cooperate, saying that "the time was not favorable for Revision, and that the risk was greater than the probable gain."⁶⁷

So it does not appear that the desire for revision was nearly as widespread as White would have it. The Queen refused to cooperate, as did half of the church!

The "careful policies of revision" can be found in any number of sources. I have them before me in a book from the era by Dorus Clarke. But, however careful the *policies* may have been, the actual *procedure* was something else. I have dealt with this in detail on pages 165 through 167.

White's Response

With all this in mind, it is extremely difficult to see how our article came up with the conclusion that the Revised Version was not a revision "at all." True, it was made with careful reference to the Critical Text rather than the inferior Received Text, but to say that this Critical Text was an "invention" by Westcott and Hort is clearly abusing the facts. It was a text compiled from a much broader and older base of manuscript authority and a much more scientific approach than the haphazard Received Text.

Segraves' Rejoinder

The RV was not a revision because it was based upon a completely different text in the New Testament. You cannot have two different works based on two different texts and call one a “revision” of the other. To say that the RV was made with “careful reference” to W-H’s critical text is not correct either. Not only did they “carefully refer” to it; they slavishly followed it. We have seen that already in our study. Even the textual scholars on White’s side admit that the RV New Testament is based on W-H’s new Greek text. And the fact is, W-H’s text *was* “invented” by them. It did *not* come from a “much broader and older base” of MS authority, nor was the approach “scientific.” And as we have seen, the Received Text was not “haphazard.”

Instead, even Greenlee, who is on White’s side, admits that Westcott and Hort followed a small number of MSS. Of that small number, they often reduced down to two, B and Aleph. And when Aleph and B disagreed (which is more often than when they agree), the final vote was B! Was this a “broad” base? By using a handful of disagreeing MSS, W-H plainly invented a new text that never existed anywhere on earth as a unit before that time.

We have examined their “scientific” approach. It assumes that 1) older is better, 2) shorter is better, 3) harder is better. Is *this* “scientific”? The word “scientific” refers to that which can be demonstrated. *Not one of W-H’s theoretical points can be demonstrated.*

White’s Response

A real comparison between the King James Version and the Revised Version has been capsulized by F. F. Bruce:

Much depends on what the reader really wants. If he is not concerned with smaller points of accuracy, but wants a literary masterpiece, with old haunting associations and beautiful cadences, he will prefer the Authorized Version. If he wants an accurate and severely literal representation of the original, calculated to serve the requirements of the careful student, he will prefer the Revised (Version).²⁹

²⁹F.F. Bruce, 233.

Segraces' Rejoinder

This is, of course, simply Bruce's opinion. Like a good adherent to the new critical texts, he believes the KJV has errors. But he has presented nothing here to prove it, so we have nothing against which to speak.

White's Response

That a handful of scholars quit the revision committee on the basis of denominational prejudice is not surprising. However, it should be remembered that the very fact that the revision committee was interdenominational was a safeguard that not any one doctrinal preference should creep into the text from a partisan position.

Segraces' Rejoinder

I can hardly believe that White has said this, since I know he is personally convinced of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ. My point was that Bible-believing members of the committee quit because the committee included a Unitarian. Doesn't White know

what a Unitarian is? I have described the Unitarian's views on pages 156 through 158. He was G. Vance Smith. He did *not* believe in the deity of Jesus Christ to any degree whatsoever. His deity, Smith thought, was only in the minds of those who deified Him. One of his favorite passages in the RV, no doubt, was I Timothy 3:16, which robs Jesus of His deity. Smith understood this well and commented on it. (See page 156.)

Another interesting point is that, while some Bible-believers quit because Smith was on the committee, Westcott and Hort threatened to quit if he was taken off, which the Upper House of Convocation requested!

So White thinks it is a *safeguard* to have an infidel on the translating committee? I cannot believe he really thinks this. I agree fully with Fowler who says,

. . . No one can translate the Holy Scriptures without the theological views of the translator having some influence and effect on the translation made. The same thing is true of one who prepares a Greek text. According to the New Testament, no matter how great their scholarship, men who are not born from above and indwelt by the Holy Spirit cannot be trusted either to advise with respect to the Greek text of the New Testament or to translate it correctly. This principle is stated in I Corinthians 2:14 where it says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."⁶⁸

White speaks of the committee's "interdenominational" character. It certainly was. It included a Unitarian, from the

"church" which believes practically nothing at all. It included Westcott and Hort, who, though members of the Church of England, were extremely sympathetic with the Roman Catholic Church. Hort did not believe Protestantism would last long. It included J. H. Newman, who subsequently quit the Church of England and became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. It included Stanley, who thought Bible-believers were "modern dogmatists" and that the Word of God dwelt in the sacred books of other religions as well as in the Bible. White and I are agreed that it was indeed an interdenominational group. But we disagree on how much of a "safeguard" that was.

White's Response

Dr. Scrivener may have been entitled to his opinion that the effort was destined to be a "horrendous travesty upon Christianity." Yet, conservative Christian scholars of equal or greater magnitude did not share his opinion.

Sogrates' Rejoinder

To what "conservative" scholars does White refer? Note carefully, the majority of revisers were *not* conservative. It is natural that the liberal scholars did not share his opinion, and those are the only ones who mattered, for they were in the majority, particularly after the conservative scholars quit over Smith's participation. Scrivener was a "voice crying in the wilderness." And there weren't many scholars, either conservative or liberal, "of equal or greater magnitude" than Scrivener.

White's Response

To not call Westcott and Hort fundamental Christians “in his most charitable moments” is a matter of perspective. Certainly one cannot relate them to the fundamentalists-modernist controversy of the 1930s, which arose fifty years later. Yet as F. F. Bruce again comments, “In general, the views of Wescott [sic] and Hort commanded the assent of their colleagues.”³⁰

³⁰F.F. Bruce, 233.

Segraves' Rejoinder

By “fundamental,” I mean “Bible-believing.” I refer the reader to pages 17 through 22, where he will learn of Westcott and Hort’s views from their own testimony. They were strongly sympathetic with Roman Catholicism, did not believe in the Creation as recorded in Genesis (instead they were fond of Darwin’s new theory), did not believe in the doctrine of original sin, did not believe in the blood atonement of Christ, etc. I believe my statement will stand in anybody’s perspective, including White’s.

As for the statement by Bruce that “in general” the views of W-H “commanded the assent of their colleagues,” this simply tells us what their colleagues believed!

The Article

Which would you rather accept as God’s Holy Word? A translation based on the overwhelming majority of ancient manuscripts, rendered by sincere Christian men, eminently qualified academically, who believed that what they were working with was inspired by God, or a version

taken from a manuscript pieced together by two men who make no claim to regard the Scriptures so highly, and who number among their colleagues Dr. G. Vance Smith, minister of St. Saviour's Gate Unitarian Chapel?

White's Response

Now for the question: "Which would you rather accept as God's Word?" The categories given in the article must be dismissed as a false dilemma. If they were indeed true categories, the choice would be obvious, but one must never allow himself to be manipulated into making a choice on the basis of a seriously deficient presentation of the case.

Segrars' Rejoinder

White says, "If they are indeed true categories, the choice would be obvious." Has he proven that they are indeed a "false dilemma"? What I have said is a fact: The KJV is based on the text represented by the overwhelming majority of ancient MSS. It was rendered by sincere Christian men who were eminently qualified. All modern versions are based essentially upon the critical text of W-H, which was indeed pieced together from a handful of MSS by two men who believed the Bible contained a myth in the account of Creation. And among their colleagues was Vance Smith, who denied the deity of Christ. *They are true categories.* And I am trying to manipulate no one; these are the facts. Will White make the "obvious" choice?

The Article

3. It gives full credit to the divinity of Christ.

One of the most dangerous things about the newer versions of the Holy Bible is the attack upon the divinity of Jesus. Take a look in any version but the King James at Scriptures like I Timothy 3:16. What do they say? Chances are, they do *not* say: “God was manifest in the flesh. . . .” Examine the last twelve verses of Mark in your “up-to-date” version. Are they there? If so, is there a footnote saying something about these verses being missing from the “most ancient manuscripts”? Are they enclosed in brackets to indicate that maybe they don’t belong there, after all? How about Luke 23:34? Does your new translation cast doubt on whether Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”? What about Luke 22:43, 44, Matthew 18:11, Mark 6:11, Matthew 5:44, Mark 1:1, and 9:44-48? On and on we could go, ad nauseum.

White’s Response

The proposal that the modern versions make a “dangerous attack upon the divinity of Jesus” is doubtful. The deity of Christ is a theological matter of interpretation and faith, as well as just a translational matter. One must either accept or reject it upon the basis of faith.

Segraves’ Rejoinder

It is only doubtful if you have never read the references in the

modern versions which have to do with Christ's deity. Fowler discovered that there are at least seventy-five references in the New Testament in which the modern versions downgrade the Lord God.¹⁰ We have examined some of them previously in our comparison of modern versions with the KJV. It is true that we either accept or reject the deity of Christ on the basis of faith, but the basis of faith is the Word of God, the Bible!

White's Response

No one, the liberal theologian included, denies the fact that the New Testament claims for Jesus divinity.

Segraves' Rejoinder

White is wrong. Smith himself provides the example as he discusses 1 Timothy 3:16:

The old reading has been pronounced untenable by the Revisers, as it has been known to be by all careful students of the New Testament. . . . It is another example of the facility with which ancient copiers could introduce the word "God" into their manuscripts—a reading which was the natural result of a growing tendency in early Christian times to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as "God manifested in the flesh." (See page 157).

White's Response

True, the liberals may attempt to bypass that claim on the

grounds of hermeneutics or form criticism or a supposed discrepancy between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of history, but they cannot alter the fact that a straightforward examination of the New Testament texts, from any textual family, proclaims Jesus as divine. A brief survey of passages from several modern versions will help point out this fact:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). (New International Version)

“Nobody has ever seen God, but God has been unfolded by the divine One, the only Son, who lies upon the Father’s breast” (John 1:18). (The Bible: A New Translation by James Moffatt)

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Philippians 2:5, 6). (New American Standard Bible)

“He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation” (Colossians 1:15). (Revised Standard Version)

“For it is in Christ that the fulness of God’s nature dwells embodied, and in Him you are made complete, and He is the Lord of all princes and rulers” (Colossians 2:9). (New Testament in Modern Speech by Richard Weymouth)

“...in this final age he (God) has spoken to us in the

Son... who is the effulgence of God's spendour [sic] and the stamp of God's very being...." (Hebrews 1:1-3) (New English Bible)

The above selections, though brief, serve to show how unfounded is the claim that the newer versions attack the deity of Christ. To base such a claim upon I Timothy 3:16 (and only one passage is an insufficient base) shows a certain lack of knowledge of the text involved.

Segrates' Rejoinder

Liberals do indeed attempt to bypass the deity of Christ on the grounds of hermeneutics or form criticism, etc., as White has said. But not only can they, they *will* alter the fact that the New Testament texts proclaim the deity of Christ, if they but get the chance! This is proved, for instance, in the seventy-five instances I have mentioned above.

But now, what of these examples White has given us from modern versions to prove that they do not attack the deity of Christ? First, I did not say that you are unable to find any references to Christ's deity in the new versions. That would be too much. I said they make a "dangerous... attack" upon the deity of Christ. If they deleted only *one* reference to His deity, that would be, as far as I am concerned, a dangerous attack. I am not willing to give up one verse, one word, one letter, or the dot over one "i" or the crossbar of one "t." Let's consider his examples:

First, he offers the NIV translation of John 1:1. Why didn't he also share John 1:14 and 18, where the words, "only Son" appear instead of "only begotten Son"? Is it accurate to say that Jesus is God's *only* Son? Scripture says that we are God's sons. No, such

a translation is *not* accurate, though practically all modern versions use it. Jesus was the only *begotten* Son, a term which reveals His unique relationship with God. What about the NIV's Luke 23:42, where the dying thief does not say, "Jesus, Lord. . ." but merely, "Jesus. . ." What of John 3:13, which abruptly takes the Son of Man out of heaven? Or John 6:47, where one no longer has to believe on Jesus, but just to believe (on what, we are not told). How about John 6:69, where instead of being "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," Jesus becomes "the Holy One of God." What of Romans 1:16, where the "gospel of Christ" shrinks to the "gospel." This could be repeated, again and again.

Second, White offers Moffatt's John 1:18, where God is "unfolded" by the "divine One, the only Son." I wonder why he chose to quote verse 18 from this version, instead of verse 1, which reads, "The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine." This is quite a different thing than saying, "The Word was God" I wonder why he didn't quote Luke 2:33 and 43. The KJV says, "Joseph and his mother" in both places. Moffatt says, "His father and mother" and "his parents."

Third, he gives the NASB version of Philippians 2:5, 6. Why did he not choose instead Mark 1:1, which reads, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," accompanied by a footnote reading, "Many mss. omit, *the Son of God*." Why did he not share John 1:18, with the novel reading, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." The only begotten God?!

Fourth, White offers the RSV of Colossians 1:15. But what about the RSV Mark 1:1, which joins the NASB is calling into question "the Son of God." And why not John 1:14, 18, which has forgotten begotten, and Jesus has become God's only Son.

Fifth, he gives Weymouth's Colossians 2:9. I regret that I do not have Weymouth before me. But I must confess that to me it

seems White has chosen a perfect example to demonstrate the weakening of Christ's deity in the newer versions. There is a world of difference between the KJV's "For in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily" and Weymouth's "the fulness of God's nature." What indeed is God's "nature"? Would that be God's traits, or characteristics? Because we believe already that Jesus is deity, we understand Colossians 2:9, even in Weymouth, to teach it. But if one had never heard of Jesus Christ, and he read that the fulness of God's nature dwells in this Christ, would he understand that Jesus was actually God manifest in the flesh? (The latter, of course, the newer versions deny.)

Finally, he appeals to NEB's Hebrews 1:1-3. Why did he not reverse the list and offer NEB's John 1:1 first? It reads, "When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was." Surely White can see that the NEB's "what God was, the Word was" is an entirely different thing than the KJV's "the word was God." As R. W. Shekner has said, "We can say Adam was 'what God was'...namely, holy and righteous before he fell into sin. But it would be madness to say, 'Adam was God.' If a man's hands are cold and his feet are cold, one could say his hands are what his feet are. But one certainly couldn't say his hands are his feet!"

So White thinks my claim that the newer versions attack the deity of Christ is unfounded. That claim, by the way, is not based upon I Timothy 3:16 alone, as is obvious, but, in my view, a new translation has to square with the deity of Christ in every single instance, or it is dangerous.

White's Response

The fixing of the text of I Timothy 3:16 has been a problem debated

among scholars for many years.³¹ The strength for rendering the passage “God was manifested. . .” rather than “He (Christ) was manifested. . .” or “which (the mystery of faith or godliness) was manifested. . .,” as it appears in the other versions, lies with the Received Text. The Received Text does put Θεος (God) rather than Ος (he or who or which) largely on the authority of Codex Alexandrinus (Codex A). In Codex A the word is not actually Θεος but Θς, which as Adam Clarke points out may be an abbreviation for Θεος occurring commonly enough in early Greek manuscripts and especially within Codex A. Thus, the difference between Θς and Ος is only a horizontal line (plus a small mark indicating contraction). To complicate matters more, the horizontal line in Θς has quite obviously been added by a later hand. Some early scholars concluded that such an ink line was added because the scribe conscientiously believed that Θς was the correct reading, and consequently, was added later as an improvement. However, Henry Alford remarks that what possibly would have appeared as a faint horizontal line in need of retouching was actually just the shadow of the middle line of the E written squarely on the same part of the page *but on the opposite side.* (One has no doubt noticed the same thing even in modern printing, where the figures on one side of the page may be seen through from the other side.) Furthermore, Alford continues,

Sir Frederick Madden now informs me that a very powerful microscope has been applied by Professor Maskelyne, at his request, to the passage in the MS, and the result has been that *no trace of either vergula in the Θς or mark of contraction over it can be discovered.* It is to be hoped therefore, that A (Codex A) will never again be cited on the side of rec (Received Text).

Some manuscripts in which Ος are found rather than Θς are C. F. Aleph. 17, 73 and 181. Guthrie summarizes, "The Authorised Version, based on the Received Text, reads God was manifested in the flesh, but all modern editors reject this reading in favour of 'Who was manifested', the masculine relative evidently referring Christ. . . ."

"The technical discussion of 1 Timothy 3:16 is based upon the following works: Henry Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, 1976, rpt.), III, p. 332; Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, n.d.), VI, p. 598, 599; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 89; S.P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the New Testament*, p. 165; F.H.A. Scrivener, *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 4th ed., Vol. II, pp. 390-395; Marvin Vincent, *Bible Studies in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946, rpt.), 239, 240, 242, 243; Ronald Ward, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1974, etc).

Segrares' Rejoinder

So White is willing to surrender 1 Timothy 3:16. I am not, and I refer the reader to my argument on pages 81 through 89. Since this is covered in detail in that place, I will forego further discussion here.

The Article

Without a doubt, your new translation will follow the Westcott-Hort Theory (an unscientific, unproved theory, similar to that of evolution!), and will either leave out altogether, or plant doubts about vast portions of the beloved Word of God.

What was that the Holy Spirit said through John? "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book

of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19).

White's Response

The concluding comments of the article call attention to several disputed passages which are based on fragmentary evidence. Apparently, the use of translations with textual annotations as to the kinds and level of manuscript authority is taboo. The impression is left that such annotations are designed to destroy the Word of God. I should like to simply address this section with several general comments.

First, annotations as to textual authority are simply comments on the facts of textual evidence. Whether these facts are pointed out in footnotes as in, for instance, The New International Version and The New American Standard Bible, or whether they are ignored is a matter of preference and does not add to or subtract from their reality. If the footnote says a certain set of verses or phrases is not in the most ancient manuscripts, the editor is only calling attention to the true state of affairs. Certainly, some may not wish to be so forthright and will prefer to remain with a less analytical approach. On the other hand, the serious student of the Word of God will not wish to neglect such matters.

Segraves' Rejoinder

As I have indicated previously in this work, the problem with the annotations, or footnotes, is that they do not tell the whole story. If a reader sees, for example, the NASB's footnote on Mark 1:1,

"Many *mss.* omit, *the Son of God*" he does not know which MSS, how many MSS, how many *include* the words under consideration, or the age of the MSS. In short, all he knows is that the words may not really be the inspired Word of God. Where does this place him? Is he better off for knowing this? If the editors were *really* forthright, they would simply drop a passage from the text and let it go at that, if they do not believe it to be the Word of God.

And notice the contradictory nature of footnotes. Take, for example, I Timothy 3:16.

NEB—He who was manifested—no footnote at all.

NASB—He who was revealed—Footnote reads, "Some *later mss.* read, *God*."

NIV—He appeared in a body—Footnote reads, "Some manuscripts *God*."

TEV—He appeared in human form—no footnote.

Amplified—He (God) was made visible—Footnote reads, Some authorities read "God."

RV—He who was manifested—Footnote reads, "The word *God*, in place of *He who rests on no sufficient ancient evidence*. Some ancient authorities read *which*.

RSV—He was manifested in the flesh—Footnote reads, "Greek *Who*; other ancient authorities read *God*; others, *Which*.

So how has the serious student of God's Word been helped? He knows that some versions think the issue so insignificant that they

don't say anything at all; some claim that *later* MSS read God; some claim *some* MSS read God; some say God rests on *no sufficient ancient evidence*; some say ancient authorities read "which"; some say other *ancient* authorities read God; and the RSV adds a new twist by saying that the Greek is *Who*. If the Greek is *Who*, how can the English be *He*!?

I believe it is obvious, with even this very limited evidence, that the current use of footnotes only serves to confuse and complicate understanding of the Holy Scriptures. A student doesn't know what to believe is God's Word.

I do not believe that ignorance is bliss. But neither do I believe that the pseudo-intellectual approach of the conflicting footnotes is of any benefit to Christians. The only way such footnotes could be used properly would be if they told the truth and the whole story: *which* MSS; *how many* MSS; *how old* of MSS. But, of course, that is impossible, for there are over 5,000 extant. This is just another dilemma of the W-H theory, which believes that, wherever the Word of God is, it is *not* in the vast majority of extant MSS.

White's Response

In the interests of kindness, we shall overlook the "ad nauseum" comment. The comparison between the Westcott-Hort Theory and evolution, however, can only be viewed as a groundless assertion.

Segraves' Rejoinder

Perhaps, now, the reader can see why I used "ad nauseum." The comparison between W-H and the theory of evolution is in no way a "groundless assertion." What they have in common is

that they are both unproved, and unprovable, theories. They cannot be demonstrated, and both abound with incredible "missing links" in their theory of reconstruction, one of the human race and the other of textual transmission. We have gone over all of this before, in detail. See my discussion of the textual theory of W-H beginning on page 23.

White's Response

Finally, while the application of Revelation 22:19 to the entire Bible is perhaps questionable (in context, it refers only to the Apocalypse), if it is to be applied at all one must remember that there is another part of the passage besides the section quoted. Revelation 22:18 has an equal charge about "adding unto these things." Thus, not only is it important that vital areas of the text are not dropped, it is equally important that unauthorized areas are not included.

Segrates' Rejoinder

I do not believe it a accident that Revelation 22:18, 19 appears, not just at the end of a book, but at the end of the entire Bible. It is not, of course, the only place in Scripture where we are warned against adding or subtracting. (See Deuteronomy 4:2 and Proverbs 30:6.) But even if Revelation 22:18, 19 referred only to that book, is Revelation more sacred than the other books? I do not think White will quibble with me over the importance of not adding to or taking away from any book in the Bible.

What truly puzzles me, however, is White's stand here, and his continued use of the KJV, because it is "more familiar." If I sincerely

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believed the KJV was corrupt, I would not use it at all. What White is doing in his classes (though he would deny this) is setting himself and textual scholars up as the *final authority* for his students. They can't believe *everything* in the KJV; nor can they believe *everything* in any modern version. To find out what really is God's Holy Word, they must come to White, or to someone else "qualified" to tell them what is and what isn't the Word of God. And, hopefully, the students will one day be trained to decide for themselves what is God's Word.

I believe this is extremely dangerous.

White's Response

In all, the argument of the article is unconvincing. It falls outside of the mainstream of conservative evangelicism. The "sincere student of God's Word" would do well to carefully examine the facts from not just one, but a selection of conservative sources. He is encouraged to research the facts objectively and to find the highest level of credibility in those conservative scholars who are generally recognized among their peers to be proficient in their fields.

Segraves' Rejoinder

At this point, only the reader can decide which argument is unconvincing. I am unmoved by that of White. The fact that it "falls outside the mainstream" concerns me not one whit. I have indeed carefully examined the facts from not just one, but a selection of conservative sources, as I believe this treatise shows. (See the bibliography.) My question is, has White so examined the facts? Has he studied Pickering as carefully as he has Greenlee? Has he

perused van Bruggen as diligently as he has Bruce? Has he followed the research of Hills as thoroughly as that of Geisler and Nix? Has he pored over Burgon like he has Westcott and Hort?

Only if he has done these things can he say for certainty that the argument is "unconvincing."

The Article

I regret that the brevity of this article demands that we pass quickly over so many important matters. However, I would suggest that the sincere student of God's Word obtain and read the following three books: *Which Bible?*, *True or False?*, and *Counterfeit or Genuine?* Each of these books is compiled by Dr. David O. Fuller, with many contributions from other scholars. They are available from your Christian bookseller or Grand Rapids International Publications, P.O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

White's Response

Rather than confining oneself to the writings of a single individual or a compilation of essays by writers that are out of date or off the subject,²² it would be wise to balance these writings by the efforts of other conservative evangelical scholars who are equally accredited and certainly more informed of modern discoveries and developments. The volumes which are mentioned in the footnotes are worthy examples of these sources and should be considered.

²²The essays against higher criticism in *Which Bible* by David Fuller must not be taken as evidence against textual criticism, since textual criticism produced the Received Text itself.

Segraves' Rejoinder

I certainly agree to the wisdom of not confining oneself to the writings of a single individual; that is why I have not done so. I have indeed studied both sides of the argument. In fact, I was at one time on White's side. But my question is whether he has truly studied both sides with equal diligence? As to his remark about the writers in Fuller being off the subject or out of date, that is simply a groundless assertion. Arguments do not go out of date with the passing of years. Truth is truth, whenever it appears. Truth never changes. Some of the writings in Fuller are more ancient (i.e. Burgon, etc.) some are more recent (i.e. Pickering, etc.) But it is not the date when something is written that causes it to be right or wrong, or of great or little value. It is its truthfulness. I doubt that anyone is more informed of modern discoveries and developments than van Bruggen or Pickering or Hodges. White's remarks here seem designed to make the reader think anyone who upholds the KJV is "out of date." This simply isn't true.

Finally, he says textual criticism produced the Received Text itself. Earlier, he said "little revision or serious critical work was done." The fact is, textual criticism *was* involved, but certainly not the kind of textual criticism developed by W-H. It was criticism based on the *majority* of MSS.

I urge White, and others who are convinced of the superiority of modern translations based on eclectic texts, to seriously and diligently reexamine their position. I can think of no more important question to ask than: Which Bible is the Word of God? They cannot all be. We *must* know which one represents the Holy Word of the Mighty God, so that we may live by every Word He has spoken.

*Grenoble, *Introduction*, p. 68.

*Ibid., p. 119.

*Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, p. 45.

*Ibid., p. 255.

*F. F. Bruce, *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1943), p. 29.

*Ibid., p. 38.

*Ibid., p. 40.

*Ibid., pp. 46, 47.

*From an article by White in a paper published by the college where he was an instructor.

*I realize it is possible to change one's mind. In 1979 I wrote a book in which I appealed to various translations. I would not do that again, and I do not believe the use of different versions was necessary to prove the point of the book.

"*The Codex Sinaiticus and The Codex Alexandrinus*, p. 19.

"Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, p. 19.

"Ibid., pp. 25, 26.

"A major effort was carried out in the ninth century wherein uncials were copied on minuscules, with the exemplars being destroyed.

"Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, pp. 26-28.

"Wilkinson in Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 317.

"Sidney Collier, *The Scripture of Truth*, 9th ed. (London: S.W. Partridge & Co. Ltd., 1916), pp. 142-45.

"Hills, *Defended*, p. 94.

"John H. P. Neumann, *The Romance of Bible Scripts and Scholars: Chapters in the History of Bible Transmission and Translation* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 15, 16.

"The Story of 'The Living Bible,'" *Eternity* (April 1973), p. 65.

"Paine, *The Maze*, pp. 168-170.

"Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, p. 28.

²³Pickering has dealt with this on pp. 110-116 of *Identity*.

²⁴Greenlee, *Introduction*, pp. 80-81.

²⁵Ibid., p. 78.

²⁶Pickering, *Identity*, p. 28.

²⁷Greenlee, p. 114.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 114-115.

³¹Ibid., p. 119.

³²Pickering, *Identity*, p. 34.

³³Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, p. 118, n. 1.

³⁴Pickering, p. 48.

³⁵Hodges, *JETS* 21, no. 2: 151.

³⁶Pickering, p. 50.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Pickering, p. 58.

³⁹Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, pp. 30, 31.

⁴⁰Van Bruggen, *Ancient Text*, pp. 22-28.

⁴¹Pickering, *Identity*, p. 129.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁴Pickering, p. 134.

⁴⁵Hills, *Defended*, pp. 106, 107, 196, 198, 199.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 200.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 211-212.

⁴⁹Summarized by T.B.S., London.

⁵⁰Hills, *Defended*, p. 212.

"*Ibid.*, pp. 212, 213.

"Hills discusses Erasmus at length on pp. 193-213.

"Donald Brake in Fuller, *Counterfeit or Genuine?*, p. 204.

"Quoted by Martin in Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 170.

"Wilkinson in Fuller, *Which Bible?*, pp. 195, 201, 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, 209.

"Fuller, *True or False?*, pp. 54-55.

"A New Translation by James Moffatt, pp. xix-xxi.

"The New International Version, p. ix.

"Revised Standard Version, p. v.

"Yigael Yadin, Masada, trans. Moshe Pearlman (Aylesbury, Bucks, England: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., Sphere Books Ltd. Cardinal edition, 1973), pp. 171, 172, 179, 187, 188.

"A complete discussion of 7Q5 can be found in Pickering's *Identity* on pp. 155-158.

"Fuller, *Which Bible?*, p. 188.

"*Ibid.*, p. 17.

"Bruce, *Books and Parchments*, p. 229.

"Grenville, *Introduction*, pp. 83-86.

"Hills, *Defended*, p. 230.

"Wilkinson in Fuller, *Which Bible?*, pp. 285-287.

"Fowler, *Evaluating*, pp. 1, 2.

"Fowler, *Evaluating*, pp. 28-64.

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